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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES,

THIRD SERIES:

COMMENCING WITH THE ACCESSION OF

WILLIAM IV.

50° & 51 VICTORIÆ, 1887.

VOL. CCCXIX.

COMPRISING THE PERIOD FROM

THE ELEVENTH DAY OF AUGUST, 1887,

TO

THE TWENTY-FIFTH DAY OF AUGUST, 1887.

Tenth Volume of the Session.

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[2.55.]

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Agricultural Labourers' Holidays (Scotland) Bill—continued.

delusive a character in such a hasty manner at this period of the Session, without the opportunity of first ascertaining the genuine opinion of all classes of agriculturists in Scotland with regard to its provisions.")—(*The Earl of Galloway.*)

After short debate, on Question, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Motion?" Their Lordships *divided;* Contents 9, Not-Contents 9.

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(In the Committee.)

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After debate, Committee report Progress; to sit again upon *Monday* next.

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Boiler Registry and Inspection Bill (No. 229)—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^a^,"—(*The Lord Stanley of Preston*) .. 450

After short debate, Motion *agreed to;* Bill read 2^a^ accordingly:—Bill (by leave of the House) *withdrawn*.

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Moved, "That the Bill be now read 3^a,"—(*The Lord Macnaghten*) .. 457
Motion *agreed to;* Bill read 3^a accordingly, with the Amendments; a further Amendment made; Bill *passed*, and sent to the Commons; and to be *printed* as amended. (No. 235.)

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Friendly Societies' Act (1875) Amendment (No. 3) Bill—
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Supply—Report—Resolution [13th August] *reported* 647
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After short debate, Resolution *agreed to.*

Bankruptcy Courts (Ireland) (*re-committed*) **Bill** [Bill 278]—
Order for Committee read 648
Moved, "That the Committee be deferred till To-morrow,"—(*Mr. Sexton:*)—Question put, and *agreed to:*—Committee *deferred* till *To-morrow.*

Valuation of Lands (Scotland) Amendment Bill [*Lords*]—
Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*The Lord Advocate*) 649
Motion *agreed to:*—Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *To-morrow.*

Police Constables' Pensions Bill [Bill 35]—
Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson*) 649
After short debate, *Moved,* "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. Biggar:*)—Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 19, Noes 64; Majority 45.—(Div. List, No. 380.) [2.45 A.M.]
Original Question put, and *agreed to:*—Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Monday* next.

Suffragans' Nomination Bill [Bill 102]—
Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Tomlinson*) .. 650
After short debate, *Moved,* "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. Conybeare:*)—Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 16, Noes 59; Majority 43.—(Div. List, No. 381.) [3.5 A.M.]
Original Question again proposed 652
Moved, "That this House do now adjourn,"—(*Mr. P. McDonald:*)—Question put, and *negatived.*
Original Question put, and *agreed to:*—Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *To-morrow.*

Municipal Regulation (Constabulary, &c.) (Belfast) [Salaries]—
Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [5th August].. 653
"That this House will, upon Monday next, resolve itself into a Committee to consider of authorising the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of a portion of the Salaries of any additional Police Magistrates for the borough of Belfast, that may be appointed under any Act of the present Session to amend the Acts relating to the Royal Irish Constabulary, and to make provision for the appointment of a Watch Committee in Belfast, and for other purposes in relation thereto."
Question again proposed:—Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*
Resolved, That this House will, To-morrow, &c.

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Considered in Committee 653
Resolution *agreed to;* to be reported *To-morrow.*

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Considered in Committee 653
Resolution *agreed to;* to be reported *To-morrow.*

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Considered in Committee 654
Resolution *agreed to;* to be reported *To-morrow.*

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Considered in Committee 654
Resolution *agreed to;* to be reported *To-morrow.*

SUPERANNUATION ACTS AMENDMENT [ALLOWANCES]—
Considered in Committee 654
Resolution *agreed to;* to be reported *To-morrow.*
[3.15.]

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Duration of Speeches in Parliament Bill (No. 97)—
Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^{a},"—(*The Lord Denman*) .. 655
On Question? *Resolved* in the *negative.*

ISLANDS OF THE WESTERN PACIFIC—THE LIQUOR TRAFFIC—Question, Observations, Earl De La Warr; Reply, The Under Secretary of State for the Colonies (The Earl of Onslow) 656
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ORDERS OF THE DAY.

Coal Mines, &c. Regulation Bill [Bill 130]—

Bill *considered* in Committee [*Progress* 15*th August*] [FIFTH NIGHT] .. 686

After long time spent therein, Committee report Progress; to sit again *To-morrow.*

Post Office Savings Banks and Government Annuities Bill—

Order for Committee read 814

Moved, "That it be an Instruction to the Committee that they have power to extend the provisions of the Bill to all Savings Banks administered by Trustees."—(*Mr. Raikes.*)

Question put, and *agreed to*:—Bill *considered* in Committee.

After some time spent therein, Bill *reported,* with an amended Title; as amended, to be considered upon *Thursday.*

Escheat (Procedure) Bill [*Lords*] [Bill 373]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Attorney General*) 825

Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. Sexton*:)—After short debate, Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 21, Noes 70; Majority 49.—(Div. List, No. 392.) [3.35 A.M.]

Original Question again proposed 827

Moved, "That this House do now adjourn,"—(*Mr. Conybeare*:)—After short debate, Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Original Question put, and *agreed to*:—Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Monday* next.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARIES [SALARIES, &c.]—REPORT—

Moved, "That this House doth agree with the Resolution of the Committee,"—(*Mr. Jackson*) 829

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn*:—Report *deferred* till *To-morrow.*

Copyright (Musical Compositions) (No. 2) Bill [Bill 322]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Bartley*) .. 829

Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. Cobb*:)—After short debate, Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 45, Noes 31; Majority 14.—(Div. List, No. 393.) [3.50 A.M.]

Debate *adjourned* till *To-morrow.*

MOTION.

Labourers' Allotments (No. 2) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Staveley Hill, Lord Henry Bruce, Mr. Brooke Robinson*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 380] .. 830

[4.0 A.M.]

COMMONS, WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 17.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

Coal Mines, &c. Regulation Bill [Bill 130]—

Bill *considered* in Committee [*Progress 16th August*] [SIXTH NIGHT] .. 830

After long time spent therein, it being a quarter of an hour before Six of the clock, the Chairman left the Chair to report Progress; Committee to sit again *To-morrow*.

ORDER OF BUSINESS—Questions, Mr. Childers, Sir Joseph Pease, Mr. Sexton, Mr. Arthur O'Connor; Answers, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson), The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie).. 913

[5.55.]

LORDS, THURSDAY, AUGUST 18.

Their Lordships met;—and having gone through the Business on the Paper without debate, [House adjourned.] [4.30.]

COMMONS, THURSDAY, AUGUST 18.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—ARRANGEMENT OF PUBLIC BUSINESS—Ministerial Statement, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith:)—Short Debate thereon 957

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

Irish Land Law Bill [*Lords*] [Bill 371]—

Order for Consideration of Postponed Amendments made by the Lords to the Commons Amendments and Lords Reason read:—Several *disagreed to* 966

Moved, "That a Committee be appointed 'to draw up Reasons to be assigned to The Lords for disagreeing to the Amendments made by the Lords to the Amendments made by the Commons to the Irish Land Law Bill, to which this House hath disagreed.'"

Motion *agreed to.*

Mr. Arthur Balfour, Mr. Attorney General for England, Mr. Attorney General for Ireland, Mr. Solicitor General for England, The Marquess of Hartington, Mr. Secretary Matthews, Mr. Jackson, and Mr. Akers-Douglas *nominated.*

Moved, "That Colonel King-Harman be added to the said Committee," —(*Mr. T. M. Healy:*)—Question put, and *agreed to*:—To withdraw immediately; Three to be the quorum.

Coal Mines, &c. Regulation Bill [Bill 130]—
Order for Committee read:—*Moved,* "That the Committee be deferred till To-morrow,"—(*Mr. W. H. Smith*) 1060
After short debate, Question put, and *agreed to*:—Committee *deferred* till *To-morrow.*

Post Office Savings Banks and Government Annuities Bill—
Bill, as amended, *considered* 1061
Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. Conybeare*:)—After short debate, Question put, and *agreed to*:—Debate *adjourned* till *To-morrow.*

Criminal Law (Scotland) Procedure (No. 2) Bill—
Lords' Amendments *considered* 1062
Debate *adjourned* till *To-morrow.*

MOTIONS.

Merchant Seamen's Widows and Orphans Pension Bill—*Ordered* (*Colonel Hill, Sir James Corry, Mr. Sinclair, Mr. Stephen Williamson*); *presented,* and read the first time [Bill 382] 1062

ADJOURNMENT—
Moved, "That this House do now adjourn,"—(*Mr. Jackson*:)—After short debate, Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 64, Noes 48; Majority 16.—(Div. List, No. 404.) [3.10.]

LORDS, FRIDAY, AUGUST 19.

CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDURE (IRELAND) ACT, 1887—SECTION 6—PROCLAMATION OF THE NATIONAL LEAGUE—Ministerial Statement, The Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (The Marquess of Salisbury) 1063

HORSE BREEDING AND SUPPLY FOR INDUSTRIAL PURPOSES—Question, Observations, Lord Ribblesdale; Reply, The Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (The Marquess of Salisbury) .. 1064

ARMY (ADMINISTRATION)—RESOLUTION—
Moved to resolve, "That reforms are urgently required in the system of administration of the Army,"—(*The Earl of Dunraven*) .. 1066
After short debate, Motion (by leave of the House) *withdrawn.*

Irish Land Law Bill—CONSIDERATION OF COMMONS' AMENDMENTS—
Returned from the Commons with several of the amendments made by the Lords to the amendments made by the Commons, and of the consequential amendments made by the Lords to the Bill, *agreed to;* several other amendments made by the Lords *agreed to,* with amendments; and with a consequential amendment to the Bill; several other amendments *disagreed to;* and one amendment to which the Lords have disagreed *insisted on,* for which they assign reasons 1092
Commons amendments to Lords amendments to Commons amendments, Commons consequential amendment, and Commons reasons for disagreeing to certain of the Lords amendments and for insisting on one of their amendments, *considered* (on motion).
Commons Amendments *agreed to;* and the Lords Amendments to which the Commons have disagreed *not insisted on.*

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PARLIAMENT—SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE—Observations, The Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (The Marquess of Salisbury) 1092
[6.45.]

COMMONS, FRIDAY, AUGUST 19.

Irish Land Law Bill [*Lords*]—

Reasons for disagreeing to certain of the Amendments made by the Lords to the Amendments made by the Commons, and for insisting on an Amendment to which the Lords have disagreed, *reported*, and *agreed to* :—To be communicated to The Lords 1092

QUESTIONS.

ARMS LICENCES (IRELAND)—JOHN AND CORNELIUS BRENNAN, CO. CLARE—Question, Mr. Cox; Answer, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) 1093

NATIONAL EDUCATION (IRELAND)—MODEL SCHOOLS—DEDUCTIONS FROM FEES DUE TO TEACHERS—Question, Mr. Johnston; Answer, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) .. 1093

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—THE NATIONAL FORESTERS' EXCURSION AT BALLYMENA—Questions, Mr. Johnston, Mr. Macartney, Mr. Sexton; Answers, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) 1094

THE CHARITY COMMISSIONERS—PAYMENT OF RENT-CHARGES ON SMALL CHARITY ESTATES—Question, Sir Walter Foster; Answer, The Vice President of the Council (Sir William Hart Dyke) 1097

LABOURERS' (IRELAND) ACT—THE KINSALE UNION—Question, Mr. Hooper; Answer, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) 1098

WAR OFFICE—THE VALISE EQUIPMENT OF VOLUNTEERS—Questions, Mr. Mark Stewart, Mr. Tomlinson; Answers, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) 1098

EGYPT—ARABI PASHA AND OTHER EXILES—AN AMNESTY—Question, Mr. Evelyn; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) 1099

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—MAJOR TRAILL—Questions, Mr. Johnston; Answers, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) 1099

WAR OFFICE (ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT)—THE NEW RIFLE—Questions, Mr. Hanbury; Answers, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) 1100

WAR OFFICE (ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT)—THE NEW SWORD BAYONET—Questions, Mr. Hanbury; Answers, The Surveyor General of Ordnance (Mr. Northcote) 1100

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LAW AND JUSTICE (SCOTLAND)—SHERIFF SUBSTITUTES—Question, Sir George Campbell; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) 1102

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ARMY (AUXILIARY FORCES)—THE VOLUNTEER FORCE—MARCHING COLUMN—Question, Mr. Neville; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) 1104

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IRISH LAND LAW BILL—Question, Mr. Lea; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) 1114

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

Labourers' Allotments Bill [Bill 329]—

Bill *considered* in Committee [*Progress* 12*th August*] [FIRST NIGHT] .. 1115

After long time spent therein, Committee report Progress; to sit again upon *Thursday* next.

Truck Bill [Bill 377]—CONSIDERATION OF LORDS' AMENDMENTS—

Several *agreed to;* Several *disagreed to* 1236

Committee *appointed,* "to draw up Reasons to be assigned to The Lords for disagreeing to certain Amendments to which this House hath disagreed:"—Mr. Bradlaugh, Mr. Secretary Matthews, Mr. Attorney General for England, Mr. Stuart-Wortley, Mr. Warmington, Mr. John Ellis, Mr. Arthur Williams, Mr. Howard Vincent, and Mr. Esslemont:—To withdraw immediately; Three to be the quorum.

Post Office Savings Banks and Government Annuities Bill [Bill 344]—

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Consideration of Bill, as amended [18th August] 1249

Bill to be read the third time *To-morrow.*

Coal Mines, &c. Regulation Bill [Bill 130]—

Bill *considered* in Committee [*Progress 17th August*] 1250

Bill *reported;* as amended, to be considered upon *Monday* next, and to be *printed.* [Bill 383.]

Metropolitan Police (*re-committed*) **Bill** [Bill 321]—

Bill *considered* in Committee [*Progress 13th August*] 1251

After short time spent therein, Bill *reported,* without Amendment; Bill read the third time, and *passed.*

Criminal Law (Scotland) Procedure (No 2) Bill—

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Consideration of Lords' Amendments [18th August] 1253

Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Dr. Clark:*)—Question put, and *agreed to:*—Debate *further adjourned* till *Monday* next.

Irish Land Law Bill [*Lords*]—

Reasons for disagreeing to certain of the Amendments made by The Lords to the Amendments made by the Commons, and for insisting on an Amendment to which the Lords have disagreed, *reported,* and *agreed to:*—To be communicated to The Lords.

MUNICIPAL REGULATION (CONSTABULARY, &C.) (BELFAST) [SALARIES]—

Considered in Committee 1255

Resolution *agreed to;* to be reported *To-morrow.*

Truck Bill—

Reasons for disagreeing to certain Amendments made by The Lords to which this hath disagreed, *reported,* and *agreed to:*—To be communicated to The Lords.

MOTION.

SITTING OF THE HOUSE (SATURDAY)—

Resolved, That the Sitting of the House on Saturday next be held subject to the Standing Orders that regulate the Sitting of the House on Wednesdays.—(*Mr. William Henry Smith.*)

[2.20.]

COMMONS, SATURDAY, AUGUST 20.

PETITION.

CRIMINAL LAW—ISRAEL LIPSKI, CONVICTED OF MURDER—Petition presented, Mr. Cunninghame Graham 1255

Petition laid on the Table.

Question, Mr. Cunninghame Graham; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) 1255

ORDER OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY—*considered* in Committee—CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES—

(In the Committee.)

CLASS V.—FOREIGN AND COLONIAL SERVICES.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £104,524, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1888, for the Expenses of Her Majesty's Embassies and Missions Abroad" .. 1257

Moved, "That Item A be reduced by £500, part of the Salary of the Agent in Egypt,"—(*Sir George Campbell*:)—After long debate, it being a quarter of an hour before Six of the clock, the Chairman left the Chair to report Progress.

Committee to sit again upon *Monday* next.

QUESTIONS.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—ARRANGEMENT OF PUBLIC BUSINESS—Questions, Sir George Campbell, Mr. Conybeare, Mr. Bryce; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) [Further Questions thereon] 1344

[5.50.]

COMMONS, MONDAY AUGUST 22.

ISLANDS OF THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC—THE NEW HEBRIDES—THE FRENCH COLONISTS—Question, Mr. Labouchere; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) 1346

ROYAL PARKS AND PLEASURE GARDENS—RABIES AMONG THE DEER IN WINDSOR PARK—DOGS—Question, Mr. Labouchere; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) 1346

WAR OFFICE (ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT)—ENFIELD SMALL ARMS FACTORY—Question, Mr. Hanbury; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) 1347

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—FIRING FROM AN EXCURSION TRAIN AT COLERAINE—Question, Mr. Macartney; Answer, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) 1348

BRAZIL—EXACTIONS FROM A BRITISH FIRM—Question, Mr. E. Robertson; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) 1348

AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT—THE HESSIAN FLY—Question, Mr. H. Gardner; Answer, The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Lord John Manners) 1349

SCOTLAND—THE GREENOCK POLICE—ALLEGED ASSAULT ON A BOY—Question, Mr. Cunninghame Graham; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) 1350

ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY—REMOVAL OF THE POLICE STATION FROM CARRIGAHORIG, CO. TIPPERARY—Question, Mr. Johnston; Answer, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) 1351

AFRICA (WEST)—THE ROYAL NIGER COMPANY—Question, Sir George Campbell; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) 1352

INDIA—THE NIZAM'S STATE RAILWAY—Questions, Sir George Campbell; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst) .. 1352

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND) — ROCHFORD (CO. WESTMEATH) PETTY SESSIONS—NON-ATTENDANCE OF MAGISTRATES—Questions, Mr. Tuite; Answers, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) 1353

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ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY—*considered* in Committee—CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES—

(In the Committee.)

CLASS III.—LAW AND JUSTICE.

(1.) £88,354, to complete the sum for Criminal Prosecutions, Sheriffs' Expenses, &c.—After short debate, Vote *agreed to* 1374

(2.) Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £250,738, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1888, for such of the Salaries and Expenses of the Supreme Court of Judicature as are not charged on the Consolidated Fund" 1377

Moved, "That a sum, not exceeding £249,238, be granted for the said Services,"—(*Mr. Arthur O'Connor*:)—After debate, Motion, by leave, *withdrawn*.

Original Question again proposed 1402

After short debate, Original Question put, and *agreed to*.

SUPPLY—CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES—Committee—*continued.*

(3.) £8,680, to complete the sum for the Wreck Commission.—After short debate, Vote *agreed to* 1414

(4.) £350,789, to complete the sum for County Courts.—After short debate, Vote *agreed to* 1417

(5.) £1,442, to complete the sum for Land Registry.—After short debate, Vote *agreed to* 1426

(6.) £20,370, to complete the sum for Revising Barristers, England

(7.) £8,689, to complete the sum for Police Courts, London and Sheerness.—After short debate, Vote *agreed to* 1432

(8.) Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £275,620, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1888, for contribution towards the Expenses of the Metropolitan Police, and of the Horse Patrol and Thames Police, and for the Salaries of the Commissioner, Assistant Commissioners, and Receiver" 1434

Moved, "That the Item A, Salaries, be reduced by the sum of £1,500,"—(*Mr. Pickersgill:*)—After short debate, Question put:—The Committee *divided;* Ayes 30, Noes 118; Majority 88.—(Div. List, No. 411.) [10.30 P.M.]

Original Question again proposed 1461

After short debate, *Moved,* "That a sum, not exceeding £274,620, be granted to Her Majesty for the said Services,"—(*Mr. Pickersgill:*)—After further short debate, Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Original Question again proposed 1466

Original Question put, and *agreed to.*

(9.) £21,000, to complete the sum for Special Police.—After short debate, Vote *agreed to* 1466

(10.) £856,286, to complete the sum for Police—Counties and Boroughs, Great Britain.—After short debate, Vote *agreed to* 1467

(11.) Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £508,018, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1888, for the Expenses of the Prisons in England, Wales, and the Colonies" .. 1469

After short debate, *Moved,* "That the Item G, Medicine, &c., be reduced by the sum of £95, in respect of Drugs,"—(*Mr. Picton:*)—After further short debate, Question put:—The Committee *divided;* Ayes 34, Noes 114; Majority 80.—(Div. List, No. 412.) [11.50 P.M.]

Original Question again proposed 1483

After debate, *Moved,* "That a sum, not exceeding £503,018, be granted for the said Services,"—(*Mr. Arthur Connor:*)—After further short debate, Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Original Question put, and *agreed to.*

(12.) £121,261, to complete the sum for Reformatory and Industrial Schools, Great Britain.—After short debate, Vote *agreed to* 1499

(13.) £22,549, to complete the sum for Broadmoor Lunatic Asylum.—After short debate, Vote *agreed to* 1510

Resolutions to be reported.

Moved, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again,"—(*Mr. Conybeare:*)—After short debate, Question put:—The Committee *divided;* Ayes 15, Noes 94; Majority 79.—(Div. List, No. 413.) [2.15 A.M.]

Moved, "That the Chairman do now leave the Chair,"—(*Mr. Labouchere:*)—After short debate, Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Resolutions to be reported *To-morrow;* Committee to sit again *To-morrow.*

Criminal Law (Scotland) Procedure (No. 2) Bill—CONSIDERATION OF LORDS' AMENDMENTS [ADJOURNED DEBATE]—

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question 18th [August], "That this House doth agree with the Lords in the Amendment in page 2, line 4, to leave out from 'to,' to 'district,' in line 6, and insert 'the limits within which the sheriff has jurisdiction in criminal matters, whether by statute or at common law'" 1519

Question put, and *agreed to:*—Subsequent Amendments *agreed to.*

[2.30.]

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Their Lordships met;—and the Royal Assent having been given to several Bills, [House adjourned.] [4.15.]

COMMONS, TUESDAY, AUGUST 23.

QUESTIONS.

BURMAH—THE JADE WORKINGS—CONCESSIONS TO CHINESE MERCHANTS—Question, Mr. Hanbury; Answer, The Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst) 1520

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES ACT—THE ROYAL LIVER FRIENDLY SOCIETY—Questions, Mr. Bradlaugh, Mr. Sexton; Answers, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) 1521

MOROCCO—BRITISH JURISDICTION OVER OFFENDING BRITISH SUBJECTS—Question, Mr. A. M'Arthur; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) 1522

EGYPT—SUPPORT OF THE KHEDIVE'S AUTHORITY—Questions, Dr. Clark; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) 1523

ADMIRALTY—ALLEGED MISAPPROPRIATION OF STORES AT HAULBOWLINE—Questions, Mr. Hooper; Answers, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton), The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) 1523

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (IRELAND)—EMPLOYMENT OF LOCAL SHORTHAND WRITERS—Question, Mr. Hooper; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) 1525

VACCINATION—TRANSMISSION OF SYPHILIS—Question, Mr. Picton; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) .. 1525

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—MR. TYRELL, J.P., EDENDERRY—Questions, Dr. Fox; Answers, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) 1527

BOARD OF TRADE (RAILWAY DEPARTMENT)—LEVEL CROSSING AT LITTLEMORE, GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY—Question, Mr. F. Parker; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) .. 1527

LAW AND POLICE—THE SALVATION ARMY—RELIGIOUS SERVICE IN STAMFORD MARKET PLACE — Questions, Mr. Henry H. Fowler, Mr. Johnston; Answers, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) 1528

SUPERANNUATION ACTS AMENDMENT BILL—POSTMEN'S CHRISTMAS GRATUITIES—Question, Sir Robert Fowler; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) 1529

AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT OF THE PRIVY COUNCIL—DAIRY SCHOOLS—THE MUNSTER DAIRY SCHOOL—Question, Mr. M'Laren; Answer, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) .. 1529

AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT OF THE PRIVY COUNCIL—THE CHESHIRE DAIRY INSTITUTE—Questions, Mr. M'Laren, Mr. M. J. Kenny; Answers, The Vice President of the Council (Sir William Hart Dyke) .. 1529

HORSE-BREEDING IN IRELAND—THE TRUSTEES OF THE GRANT—Questions, Mr. Cox, Mr. M. J. Kenny; Answers, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) 1530

STATE OF IRELAND—BOYCOTTING AND POLICE PROTECTION—STATISTICAL RETURN—Questions, Mr. Sexton; Answers, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) 1531

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IRELAND—THE DUBLIN POLICE FORCE—TEARING DOWN PLACARDS—Question, Mr. Sexton; Answer, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) 1532

CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 1885—EVASION BY KEEPERS OF CAFES CHANTANTS IN ROTTERDAM AND OTHER PLACES—Question, Mr. James Stuart; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) 1533

WAR OFFICE—NURSING SISTERS IN THE ARMY MEDICAL SERVICE—Questions, Mr. James Stuart; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) 1533

INDIA (BOMBAY)—THE SALE OF SPIRITUOUS LIQUORS—Questions, Mr. Rowntree; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst) 1534

REVISION OF THE STATUTES—THE SHERIFFS' (CONSOLIDATION) BILL AND THE CORONERS' ELECTIONS BILL—Question, Mr. Bryce; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) 1535

CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDURE (IRELAND) ACT, 1887—PROCLAMATION OF THE NATIONAL LEAGUE—Question, Mr. E. Robertson; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) 1535

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY—*considered* in Committee—CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES.

(In the Committee.)

CLASS IV.—EDUCATION, SCIENCE, AND ART.

(1.) Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £278,558, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1888, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Science and Art Department, and of the Establishments connected therewith" 1536

After short debate, *Moved*, "That a sum, not exceeding £278,158, be granted for the said Services,"—(*Mr. Conway*:)—After further short debate, Motion, by leave, *withdrawn*.

Original Question again proposed 1551

After debate, Original Question put, and *agreed to*.

(2.) Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £77,385, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1888, for the Salaries and Expenses of the British Museum, including the amount required for the Natural History Museum" 1562

After short debate, *Moved*, "That a sum, not exceeding £64,385, be granted to Her Majesty for the said Services,"—(*Mr. Molloy*:)—After further short debate, Motion, by leave, *withdrawn*.

Original Question again proposed 1574

After short debate, Original Question put, and *agreed to*.

(3.) £4,908, to complete the sum for the National Gallery.—After short debate, Vote *agreed to* 1576

(4.) £1,116, to complete the sum for the National Portrait Gallery.—After short debate, Vote *agreed to* 1588

(5.) Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £13,800, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1888, for Grants in Aid of the Expenditure of certain Learned Societies in Great Britain and Ireland" 1589

Moved, "That a sum, not exceeding £12,800, be granted for the said Services,"—(*Mr. Buchanan*:)—After debate, Question put:—The Committee *divided*; Ayes 45, Noes 99; Majority 54.—(Div. List, No. 414.) [10.20 P.M.]

SUPPLY—CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES—Committee—*continued.*

Original Question again proposed 1613
After short debate, Original Question put, and *agreed to.*
(6.) £7,321, to complete the sum for the London University.
(7.) £9,000, to complete the sum for the University Colleges, Wales.—After short debate, Vote *agreed to* 1619
(8.) £1,487, to complete the sum for the Deep Sea Exploring Expedition (Report).—After short debate, Vote *agreed to* 1620

CLASS V.—FOREIGN AND COLONIAL SERVICES.

(9.) Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £104,524, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1888, for the Expenses of Her Majesty's Embassies and Missions Abroad" .. 1622
After debate, *Moved,* "That Item A, Salaries, &c., be reduced by the sum of £100, part of the Salary of the Ambassador at Paris,"—(*Mr. E Robertson:*)—After further short debate, Question put:—The Committee *divided;* Ayes 50, Noes 103; Majority 53.—(Div. List, No. 415.) [12.30 A.M.]
Original Question again proposed 1647
After short debate, Original Question put, and *agreed to.*
(10.) Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £84,125, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1888, for the Expense of the Consular Establishments Abroad, and for other Expenditure chargeable on the Consular Vote" 1657
Moved, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again,"—(*Colonel Nolan:*)—After short debate, Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*
Original Question again proposed 1660
After short debate, Original Question put, and *agreed to.*
(11.) £8,400, to complete the sum for Slave Trade Services.—After debate, Vote *agreed to* 1664
(12.) Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £1,505, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1888, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Three Representatives of Her Majesty's Government on the Council of Administration of the Suez Canal Company" .. 1669
Moved, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again,"—(*Dr. Tanner:*)—After short debate, Question put, and *negatived.*
Original Question put, and *agreed to.*
(13.) £21,030, to complete the sum for Subsidies to Telegraph Companies.

Resolutions to be reported *To-morrow;* Committee to sit again *To-morrow.*

SUPPLY—REPORT—Resolutions [22nd August] *reported* 1672

(1.) (£88,354, Criminal Prosecutions at Assizes and Quarter Sessions, and for Adjudications under "The Summary Jurisdiction Act, 1869;" for Sheriff's Expenses, Salaries to Clerks of Assize and other Officers, Compensation to Clerks of the Peace and others; and for Expenses incurred under Extradition Treaties)
—read a first and second time.

After short debate, Resolution *agreed to.*

Remaining Resolutions *agreed to.*

Charity Commissioners (Officers) Bill [Bill 362]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Attorney General*) 1673

Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. Arthur O'Connor:*)—After short debate, Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Original Question put, and *agreed to:*—Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Thursday.*

Licensed Premises (Earlier Closing) (Scotland) Bill [Bill 384]

Lords' Amendments *considered* 1676

After debate, *Moved,* "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. Caldwell:*) — Question put, and *agreed to:* — Debate *adjourned* till *Friday.*

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Irish Land Law Bill—

Message from *The Lords*,—That they have *agreed to* the Amendments made by this House to the Amendments made by the Lords to the Amendments made by this House to the Irish Land Law Bill, and to the Consequential Amendment made by this House to the said Bill, without any Amendment, and do not insist on their Amendments to which this House has *disagreed.* [3.0.]

COMMONS, WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 24.

QUESTION.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—ARRANGEMENT OF SCOTCH BUSINESS—Question, Sir George Campbell; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) 1685

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY—*considered* in Committee—CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES—

(In the Committee.)

CLASS III.—LAW AND JUSTICE.

(1.) £43,465, to complete the sum for Courts of Law and Justice, Scotland.—After short debate, Vote *agreed to* 1686

(2.) £23,269, to complete the sum for the Register House Department, Edinburgh.—After short debate, Vote *agreed to* 1689

(3.) £4,000, to complete the sum for the Crofters Commission.—After debate, Vote *agreed to* 1700

(4.) £146,537, to complete the sum for Police—Counties and Burghs, Scotland.—After short debate, Vote *agreed to* 1721

(5.) £63,494, to complete the sum for Prisons, Scotland.—After short debate, Vote *agreed to* 1723

Moved, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again,"—(*Mr. Mason* :)—After short debate, Question put, and *agreed to.*

Resolutions to be reported *To-morrow ;* Committee to sit again upon *Friday*.

Lunacy Districts (Scotland) Bill [*Lords*] [Bill 318]—

Order for Committee read :—*Moved*, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair,"—(*The Lord Advocate*) 1724

After short debate, Question put, and *agreed to* :—Bill *considered* in Committee :—After some time spent therein, Bill *reported ;* as amended, to be considered upon *Friday*.

Sheriff of Lanarkshire Bill [Bill 349]—

Order for Committee read :—*Moved*, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair,"—(*The Lord Advocate*) 1736

After short debate, Amendment proposed, to leave out from the word "That," to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "this House will, upon this day three months, resolve itself into the said Committee,"—(*Mr. Hunter*,)—instead thereof.

Question put, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question :"—The House *divided ;* Ayes 111, Noes 38 ; Majority 73.—(Div. List, No. 418.)

Main Question put, and *agreed to* :—Bill *considered* in Committee, and *reported*, without Amendment ; read the third time, and *passed.*

Secretary for Scotland Act (1885) Amendment Bill [*Lords*]—
Bill *considered* in Committee 1743
After some time spent therein, Bill *reported;* as amended, to be considered upon *Friday,* and to be *printed.* [Bill 385.]

NOTICE OF MOTION.

Irish National League (Special Proclamation)—Notice of Motion, Mr. W. E. Gladstone 1775

QUESTIONS.

Dominion of Canada — Employment of British Imperial Troops — Question, Sir Henry Tyler; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Sir Henry Holland) 1775
Merchant Shipping—Burning of the "City of Montreal"—Recovery of the Missing Boat—Observation, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) 1776
[5.50.]

LORDS, THURSDAY, AUGUST 25.

Conveyancing (Scotland) Acts Amendment Bill (No. 233)—
Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^{a},"—(*The Marquess of Lothian*) .. 1776
After short debate, Motion *agreed to:*—Bill read 2^{a} accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House on *Tuesday* next.

Open Spaces (Dublin) Bill (No. 213)—
Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^{a},"—(*The Lord Mount-Temple*) .. 1788
After short debate, on Question? *Resolved* in the *negative.*

Trustee Savings Banks Bill (No. 221)—
Moved, "That the House do now resolve itself into Committee upon the said Bill,"—(*The Lord Elphinstone*) 1790
After short debate, Motion *agreed to;* House in Committee accordingly: Amendments made; the Report thereof to be received *To-morrow;* and Bill to be *printed.* (No. 245.)

Public Libraries (Scotland) Acts Amendment Bill (No. 238)—
Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^{a},"—(*The Earl of Crawford*) .. 1791
Motion *agreed to:*—Bill read 2^{a} accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House *To-morrow.*

Women's Suffrage (No. 1) Bill—Observations, Lord Denman, The Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (The Marquess of Salisbury) 1792

Truck Bill—
Returned from the Commons with several of the amendments *agreed to;* one *agreed to,* with an amendment, and several *disagreed to,* with reasons for such disagreement, and with a consequential amendment to the Bill: The said amendments and reasons to be *printed.* (No. 239.)
[6.15.]

COMMONS, THURSDAY, AUGUST 25.

QUESTIONS.

Post Office (Ireland)—Delivery at Glengevlin, Co. Cavan—Question, Mr. Biggar; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) .. 1793

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Mines Regulation Acts—The Tawd Vale Colliery, Skelmersdale—Question, Mr. Burt; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) 1793

Board of Trade (Railway Department)—The Railway Whistle at Night in the Metropolis—Question, Mr. Lawson; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) .. 1794

Metropolis (Closed Burial Grounds)—State of Whitfield Chapel Burial Ground, Tottenham Court Road—Question, Mr. Lawson; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) 1794

Public Health (Metropolis)—The Regent's Canal Basin—Question, Mr. Lawson; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) 1794

Law and Justice (Ireland)—Powers of Commitment of a County Court Judge—Questions, Mr. P. O'Brien, Mr. Sexton; Answers, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Gibson) 1795

Admiralty—The Dockyards—Dismissal of Workmen at Portsmouth—Question, Sir Samuel Wilson; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) 1796

Friendly Societies Act, 1875—The Agricultural Labourers' Union—Question, Lord Henry Bruce; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) 1797

Admiralty—Subvention of Merchant Steamers for War Purposes—Question, Captain Colomb; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Forwood) 1798

Parliamentary Voters (Scotland)—Disqualification for Non-Payment of Poor Rates—Question, Dr. Clark; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) 1799

The Select Committee on Army and Navy Estimates—Instructions to the Accountants—Question, Mr. Boord; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) 1799

Law and Justice (Ireland)—Appointment of Judges—Supreme Court of Judicature (Ireland) Bill—Questions, Mr. T. W. Russell, Mr. Henry H. Fowler; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) 1800

Evictions (Ireland)—Westmeath—Questions, Mr. D. Sullivan; Answers, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Gibson) 1801

Egypt—Administration of Justice—The Reports—Question, Sir George Campbell; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) 1802

Egypt (Finance, &c.)—Abolition of the Corvee—The Native Army—Question, Sir George Campbell; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) 1803

Public Health (Metropolis)—Condition of Trafalgar Square—Questions, Mr. Kimber; Answers, The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Plunket) 1803

Law and Justice (England and Wales)—Burning of St. Paul's Church, Colwyn Bay—Question, Mr. T. E. Ellis; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) .. 1805

Post Office—Circulars to Members of Friendly Societies—Question, Sir Edward Birkbeck; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) 1805

The Crofters' Commission—The Annual Report—Question, Dr. Clark; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) .. 1806

Post Office—Sunday Postal Labour—Report of the Select Committee—Question, Dr. Clark; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) 1806

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HIGHWAY ACTS—THE SALVATION ARMY—RELIGIOUS SERVICES AT WARWICK—Question, Mr. Johnston; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) 1807

POST OFFICE—POST AND MONEY ORDER OFFICE AT WILLESDEN—SALE OF BEER—Question, Mr. S. Smith; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) 1807

ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY—INSPECTION OF POLICE STATIONS—Question, Mr. Arthur O'Connor; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Gibson) 1807

PATENTS OFFICE INQUIRY COMMITTEE—THE PATENT OFFICE—Questions, Mr. Arthur O'Connor, Mr. Hanbury; Answers, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms), The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) 1808

VENEZUELA — SEIZURE OF THE BRITISH SHIPS "HENRIETTA" AND "JOSEPHINE"—Question, Mr. Watt; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) 1809

VENEZUELA AND BRITISH GUIANA—THE BOUNDARY QUESTION—Question, Mr. Watt; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) 1810

WAR OFFICE—REGIMENTAL BANDS AT PUBLIC MEETINGS — Question, Captain Cotton; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) 1810

HIGHWAY ACTS—THE SALVATION ARMY—RELIGIOUS SERVICES AT STAMFORD—Questions, Mr. A. M'Arthur, Mr. Henry H. Fowler; Answers, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) .. 1811

PIERS AND HARBOURS (IRELAND)—PIER AT MALIN HEAD, COUNTY DONEGAL—Question, Mr. O'Doherty; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) 1811

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—THE POLICE AT KANTURK—Questions, Mr. Flynn, Mr. Sexton; Answers, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Gibson) 1812

PALACE OF WESTMINSTER—THE CRYPT UNDER THE HOUSE OF COMMONS—Questions, Mr. P. O'Brien; Answers, The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Plunket) 1813

POST OFFICE (SCOTLAND)—THE CALEDONIAN CANAL—Question, Dr. Clark; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) 1814

IRELAND—THE PROCLAMATION OF THE NATIONAL LEAGUE—ADMINISTRATION OF THE CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDURE (IRELAND) ACT, 1887—Questions, Mr. Mac Neill; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour); Questions, Mr. Chance, Mr. Sexton [No reply] .. 1815

NORTH SEA FISHERIES — DISTURBANCES AT OSTEND — PROTECTION OF BRITISH FISHERMEN — Questions, Sir Henry Tyler, Mr. Cavendish Bentinck, Mr. Childers; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) 1816

INDIA (BOMBAY)—SALE OF SPIRITS—Question, Mr. Rowntree; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst) .. 1817

WAR OFFICE (ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT)—DEFECTIVE BAYONETS—Question, Mr. Hanbury; Answer, The Surveyor General of Ordnance (Mr. Northcote) 1818

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—CRIMINAL CASES AT THE SUMMER ASSIZES—Questions, Mr. Sexton, Mr. Johnston, Mr. Edward Harrington; Answers, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Gibson), The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) 1818

BANKRUPTCY ACT, 1883—FOURTH REPORT OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL——Question, Mr. Dixon-Hartland; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) 1820

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NORTH SEA FISHERIES—COLLISION OF AN OSTEND AND AN ENGLISH BOAT—Questions, Mr. Dixon-Hartland, Mr. Wootton Isaacson; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) 1821

TURKEY IN ASIA—OUTRAGE ON AN ENGLISH LADY AT ALEPPO—Question, Mr. Bryce; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) 1822

LAW AND JUSTICE (ENGLAND AND WALES)—SENTENCE ON MIRIAM JONES, CONVICTED OF ATTEMPTED CHILD MURDER—Question, Mr. Pickersgill; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) 1822

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND—ESTABLISHMENT FOR THE OFFICE—Question, General Sir George Balfour; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) 1823

THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION—APPOINTMENT OF MR. W. J. COURTHOPE—Questions, Mr. T. E. Ellis, Mr. Pickersgill; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) 1823

ALLOTMENTS BILL — Question, Mr. H. Gardner; Observations, Mr. Channing; Reply, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) 1825

CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDURE (IRELAND) ACT, 1887—PROCLAMATION OF THE NATIONAL LEAGUE—THE IRISH PRIVY COUNCIL—Questions, Mr. W. A. Macdonald, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) 1825

MOTIONS.

ORDERS OF THE DAY—

Ordered, That the Orders of the Day be postponed until after the Notice of Motion relating to the Special Proclamation as to the Association known as the Irish National League.—(*Mr. William Henry Smith.*)

IRISH NATIONAL LEAGUE (SPECIAL PROCLAMATION) — MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS—

Moved, "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, humbly to represent to Her Majesty that there has been laid before this House a Special Proclamation of the Viceroy of Ireland, declaring the Association known as the Irish National League to be a dangerous Association, under 'The Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act, 1887.'

"That no information has been furnished to Parliament to justify the issue of the said Special Proclamation, by virtue of which Her Majesty's subjects are liable to be punished as criminals without judicial inquiry into the nature of their acts.

"And, that this House, in the absence of such information, prays that the said Proclamation shall not continue in force as to the Association named and described therein,"—(*Mr. Gladstone*) 1827

After long debate, *Moved*, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Sir George Trevelyan:*)—Motion *agreed to:*—Debate *adjourned* till *To-morrow.*

ORDER OF THE DAY.

Labourers' Allotments Bill [Bill 329]—

Bill *considered* in Committee [*Progress* 19*th August*] [SECOND NIGHT] .. 1915

After long time spent therein, Committee report Progress; to sit again upon *Saturday.* [4.45 A.M.]

COMMONS.

NEW WRITS ISSUED.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 11.

For *the County of Carlow*, *v.* John Aloysius Blake, esquire, deceased.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 17.

For *Huntingdonshire* (*Ramsey Division*), *v.* William Henry Fellowes, esquire, now Lord de Ramsey, called up to the House of Peers.

NEW MEMBER SWORN.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 16.

Chester County (*Northwich Division*)—John Tomlinson Brunner, esquire.

HANSARD'S
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES,

IN THE

SECOND SESSION OF THE *TWENTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT* OF THE
UNITED KINGDOM OF *GREAT BRITAIN* AND *IRELAND*,
APPOINTED TO MEET 5 AUGUST, 1886, IN THE FIFTIETH
YEAR OF THE REIGN OF

HER MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA.

TENTH VOLUME OF SESSION 1887.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, 11th August, 1887.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILLS—*First Reading*—Metropolitan Board of Works (Money) * (226); Boiler Registry and Inspection * (229); Deeds of Arrangement (No. 2) * (230).
Second Reading — Public Parks and Works (Metropolis) * (214).
Committee—Stannaries Act (1869) Amendment* (216-228).
Committee—Report—Settled Land Act (1882) Amendment * (220); Turnpike Roads (South Wales) * (207).
Third Reading—Criminal Law (Scotland) Procedure (No. 2)* (209), and *passed*.

PRIVATE BILLS—STANDING ORDERS, Nos. 85 & 102.

AMENDMENTS.

On the Motion of the CHAIRMAN of COMMITTEES (The Duke of Buckingham and Chandos), Standing Orders Nos. 85 and 102 were amended as follows:—

"85. When an Examiner's certificate or special report shall be referred to the Standing Orders Committee, the Committee, if they think fit, shall hear the parties affected by any Standing Order referred to in such certificate or special report, provided such parties have deposited in the office of the Clerk of the Parliaments not later than 3 o'clock on the second day after the order for the meeting of the Committee is made, a statement (to be printed in all opposed cases) of the facts to be submitted to the Committee. Such statement shall be confined strictly to the points reported upon by the Examiner, and no party on the consideration thereof by the Committee shall be allowed to travel into any matter not referred to in his statement."

"102. In all cases of opposed local Bills in which no parties have appeared on the petitions against such Bills, or, having appeared, have withdrawn their opposition before their case have been fully opened, or whose *locus standi* has been disallowed, the Committees on such Bills shall report accordingly to the House, and such Bills shall thereupon be referred to the Chairman of Committees, to be dealt with by him as if originally unopposed."

Standing Orders to be *printed* as amended. (No. 227.)

IRISH LAND LAW BILL.—(No. 218.)

(*The Lord Privy Seal, Earl Cadogan.*)

CONSIDERATION OF COMMONS' AMENDMENTS.

Order of the Day for the consideration of Commons' Amendments, read.

Moved, "That the said Amendments be now considered."—(*The Lord Privy Seal, Earl Cadogan.*)

THE DUKE OF ARGYLL said, he hoped that their Lordships would allow him to say a few words with reference to the position in which they were placed by the changes that had been made in the Bill. They were now at the 11th of August, when Members of both Houses of Parliament, to use the language of grouse shooting, began to "pack," and it was impossible to get a large number of Members to give their attention even to changes of this kind. Under these circumstances, and under the belief that the changes now proposed to their Lordships were, for the most part, matters of compromise between the two, or rather the three or four, different Parties, it was very difficult for them to act together, or even upon their own individual judgment, without involving political consequences which none of them wished to bring about; and, therefore, he could not help feeling that they were not in a position to consider these Amendments on their own merits. On that account, he wished to say a few words as to the general aspect of the Bill as it came before them. In the first place, no one could fail to see in the Amendments now before them from the Commons what an immense development they were of the principles of the Act of 1881. That Act was accepted at the time by the Irish Party, not as perfect, but as merely containing valuable "germs;" and he thought he need hardly point out how great had been the growth and development of those germs. The Bill, as now altered, made most extensive changes on the Act of 1881; and he would point out that, with two exceptions, all those changes were in the direction of greater concessions to the majority of the voting power in Ireland—now the tenants. There were only two that he believed would be of value to the landowners, though what that value might amount to he had some doubt—one, the reform of method of procedure in the case of bankrupt tenants, which he believed would be of real value; and the other was something like the establishment of a principle that rent was to be considered as just a debt as a debt to traders or other creditors. That immense development of the Act of 1881 led to important considerations. Both of these were valuable concessions in principle; but all the other Amendments were in the direction of greater concessions to the tenants. Some of them were of the most extensive kind. There was no doubt whatever that the Act of 1881 had been passed in the belief in the permanence of certain limitations contained in it; and Members of Parliament had been persuaded to believe, as they were now, that those limitations would be permanent and would be sustained. The faith of contracts had been pleaded for the exclusion of leaseholders from the Act; but almost all the limitations imposed by Mr. Gladstone, and on the faith of which that Act had been passed, had now been swept away. He thought that these facts taught them very clearly the important lesson that when a Minister came down to Parliament with very large proposals involving new principles concerning the interests of large classes of men, they could never trust to the limitations under which those proposals were made. The Minister might be perfectly sincere; and, for his own part, he (the Duke of Argyll) believed that Mr. Gladstone had been sincere in the limitations which he had placed on the Act of 1881; but the sincerity of the Minister had nothing to do with it. The personal interests of large bodies of voters had an inevitable tendency to extend themselves against all limitations which Ministers imposed. He trusted that it would be remembered in the future — the near future before them—that great general proposals involving interests of that kind were to be tested by their inevitable tendency, and not by a reference to the professed limitations which a Minister might impose. His noble Friend, on a former occasion, complained that he (the Duke of Argyll) had expended all his efforts on the political situation instead of on the Bill before them. He could not admit the justice of that remark, for no one knew better than his noble Friend that the Bill was a consequence of the political situation, and nothing else; and that when they spoke of the political situation they were speaking really of the cause and the origin of the Bill. Mr. Gladstone had lately publicly announced that he had withdrawn his Bills about Home Rule in Ireland; and a large portion of the country would believe that the further propositions Mr. Gladstone would make would be so safeguarded as to secure the safety of the Union. He could not help pointing out to the House that they were in this position—that in a limited number of years they would probably have other proposals made with regard to the government of Ireland and the interests of property in that country, and he trusted that Parliament and the country would remember that these must be judged by themselves, and without reference to any fair and specious promises of limitation. They must beware of these promises of limitation; in such circumstances they were never worth the breath with which they were uttered. They should look to the permanent motives in the minds of a large portion of the people, and they might be quite sure that any specious promises of limitations made at the time were certain to give way before the pressure which would be used against them. That was the lesson to be drawn from the change in the form this Bill had taken in the other House. Another point to which he wished to call attention was the enormous development given by this Bill to the worst fallacies of the Protective system. He was himself a thoroughly convinced Free Trader, with regard to the belief that all Protective Duties for the protection of native produce must increase their cost to the consumer; but he was not one of those who believed that under no circumstance might it be worth while for the consumer to pay an increased price for produce, and that he believed would be found to be the opinion of the people of Ireland, if ever they had a Parliament of their own. The Bill before their Lordships was not a measure for the protection of native industry, but a measure for the protection of native idleness and unthrift. He admitted that it was possible to stimulate industry in a young country by Protective Duties. Some years ago, for example, the Canadian Parliament determined to impose duty on imported agricultural implements, and the result had been to stimulate effectually the implement-making industry of Canada. Manufactories had been extended successfully, and the Canadians now paid less than of old for their agricultural implements. That was an example of the successful encouragement of a native industry by a system of Protection. But this Bill, taken in conjunction with the Land Bill of 1881, which it developed, would not stimulate any native industry in Ireland, but would be a great measure for the protection of native laziness, idleness, unthrift, and moral blindness that prevailed in that country. Fair rent had now come to mean eleemosynary rent, or rent below that which men were ready to give. The rent of the farm which a man occupied was, in future, to be fixed below the price which others would willingly give. The course the Land Commission were taking, he believed, was to make what they called the fair rent so low that the existing tenant, however idle and unthrifty, should continue to live upon his holding. Thus they prevented others, who did not hold tenancies, however more thrifty and industrious they might be, of getting any chance; and so from the tenantry of Ireland was being withheld the healthy stimulus of competition, which we believed to be essential for the advance of all industries in this country. Out of 500,000 tenants in Ireland, a large proportion, probably not less than 200,000, paid less than £4 a-year in rent. A reduction of 25 per cent upon a £4 holding was only a reduction of 20*s.* a-year, and he need hardly point out that the gain which the tenant derived from such reduction was far less than would be the gain resulting from the improvement of his industry and the system of cultivation. The reduction, therefore, was nothing but an encouragement of laziness and of idle habits. There was another remarkable change which had been made in the Bill by the House of Commons, and he trusted that it would not be acceded to by their Lordships. One of the limitations placed by Mr. Gladstone on the sweeping measure of 1881 was the removal from its purview of certain kinds of land, among others of land which had a special and artificial value through its immediate proximity to a town. The present Government, on the recommendation of the Cowper Commission, had determined to effect some change in the legislation of 1881 in this respect, and had embodied their views in the Bill. The Amendment to the proposal of the Government that had now come up from the other House would virtually abolish the special value which belonged to all accommodation land in villages or towns under a population of 2,000 persons. This provision would be very unjust. Let their Lordships remember that many of the landowners in Ireland were much poorer than their tenants; but many of them had been able to derive hope from the knowledge that an additional value attached to property close to a town. So far as the value of their property had diminished from natural causes, they had no more to complain of than others; but those who had property near towns were entitled to look for the additional value thereby attaching to it untouched. But this Amendment would sweep away from a large number of the Irish landowners that additional value; and, considering that as a matter not of politics, but as one of their personal honour, he trusted that such an Amendment as had come from the other House would never be agreed to by their Lordships, until some stronger reason of public policy could be shown for depriving the Irish proprietors of that which was undoubtedly their property than any that had been given in the House of Commons. At present, every consideration of public policy pointed in the other direction. If the Amendment were passed, and if the holders of all the plots of land in the neighbourhood of a small thriving town were given tenant-right under the Bill of 1881, the town would inevitably be deprived of all power of expansion. Then, another novelty was furnished by the Commons' Amendment attempting to regulate cotter rents. It had always seemed to him to be a great anomaly that attempts should be made to regulate the rents of tenants, and that the Legislature should shrink from regulating the rents of sub-tenants. In this Amendment an attempt—a very feeble one, it was true—was at last made to regulate these rents; but the change was to be confined to the rents of farm labourers, and they all knew that in a great part of Ireland no labourers were employed upon the holdings. The Amendment, therefore, would leave unassisted the great majority of the sub-tenants of Ireland. This Amendment was utterly nugatory as regarded the protection of the labouring population, for the attempt to regulate cotters' rents took no account of conacre. Those who, like himself, were in the habit of reading the Irish papers, especially those of the North of Ireland, would know that letting by conacre was sub-letting to all intents and purposes. Individual fields were often sub-let in this way at rents varying from £2 to £6 per acre; while the tenants were crying out that for the same land a rent of 15*s.* or £1 was monstrous and exorbitant. This system prevailed all over the North of Ireland, and no attempt was made to give the poor conacre tenants any protection whatever. This, however, was simply the beginning of a new principle, which also, no doubt, would be carried further; and the cry would soon be raised for the protection of sub-tenants all over Ireland. Having given that, then they would be asked to protect house rent as well. When was this legislation to end, and upon what principle was it to be guided? The fact was that there was no attempt at principle—a universal slipshod prevailed in Irish legislation. Then, again, certain powers had been given to revise judicial rents, and he knew that the political situation was involved therein, and that if the House rejected the compromise with respect to the revisal of those rents, the Bill would probably be lost, and political complications of a grave character would arise, and he was not inclined to advise the House to take that course; but it was his duty to ask their Lordships to look at the absurdity of the principle upon which this revision had been made. Its author was obviously a man of benevolent intentions, who knew nothing about the management of land. There was a Statutory Order of the Land Court to revise rents according to a scale of prices. That would be reasonable, if the judicial rents had been settled on a uniform principle. But the Courts had been guided by no principle, because Parliament gave them no principle. Parliament originally intended to do so, and when the Bill was introduced a principle was laid down. In the Bill of 1881 a principle of valuation was laid down, and Mr. Gladstone, in his first speech on the Bill, said it was the duty of Parliament to lay down that principle; but that duty had disappeared, and they had heard nothing of it since; in fact, the Land Courts had acted on purely arbitrary principles. The Courts had gone about the country fixing rents according to their own judgments, and according to what they might have seen. Moreover, as regarded all produce and wheat, of which, after all, little was grown in Ireland, the fall in prices had not been so great as was alleged, and the prices of the store cattle raised by the small farmers of Ireland had not fallen so much as other things. Thirty years ago—soon after the abolition of the Corn Laws—prices were lower than they were at the present moment. It might fairly be assumed that the Land Courts had fixed a fair average of rents, and he protested against their being revised. Such a revision would destroy the confidence of people in the legislation of Parliament, and in the permanence of their arrangements. In the next place, how could Courts possibly tell whether a man's inability to pay, when application was made to stay process against a tenant, arose from his own fault or not? Was idleness or ignorance, or want of skill or thrift, such a fault as would disentitle a tenant to relief? No; the Courts would bring down the rents to the level of the idleness of these people. He hoped their Lordships had all read the Blue Book produced by Mr. Balfour, and especially the evidence about the bankrupt Unions of the West of Ireland. There was not a man found to resist the grossest jobberies of public money; and the feeble protest of a few *ex officio* Guardians was of no avail to prevent the wholesale pauperizing of the population. In some Unions the whole population was in receipt of outdoor relief, and, in one case, the number scheduled, in true Irish fashion, actually exceeded the population. It was only when this state of things came to the ears of Dublin Castle that large numbers were struck off the rates. The whole of that part of Ireland was deeply in debt to the Government. In short, it was a perfect farce to legislate on this subject and to attempt to root these miserable people in holdings which would not support them. The Court would have to hear the evidence, see the rags which would probably be put on for the occasion, and lower the rent to the level of the idleness of the person to be protected in the holding, proceeding, on the poverty of the applicant being proved, to reduce the rent. He wished to make an appeal to his noble Friends who led the Opposition in that House. It seemed to him that there was a competition among Parties in England at the present moment as to who could best bribe the poor voters in Ireland. Where was the virtue which once belonged to the Liberal Party in regard to economic questions? One of the greatest triumphs of the Liberal Party immediately after the passing of the first Reform Bill was the amendment of the English Poor Laws. The evidence given before the Commission appointed to inquire into those laws described a state of things in many parts of England closely analogous to the state of things now existing in Ireland. They pointed out that the increasing poverty of the people was due to the system of the Poor Law and to the rates in aid. The whole of our legislation was now nothing but rates in aid paid out of one class of property—not paid out of the Public Exchequer, not paid by the whole of the ratepayers, but paid out of the rental of the soil. The proprietors were a small minority, and could be attacked without fear; the poor majority were the voters, and they could not be attacked without fear. He asked his noble Friends to show some of the old virtues of the Liberal Party, and to stick to the doctrines which they held for so many years in favour of economic principles. Probably they would shrug their shoulders, and say—"The thing is inevitable; you cannot help it." Do not let them be mistaken. The whole of this was essentially vicious legislation. It would increase the poverty of the Irish people and discourage their industry. Perhaps his noble Friends would say—"We must leave that to the Irish people themselves." Did they think that the local self-government that was shown by the existing Unions and other bodies in Ireland was a good presage for the local self-government of that country? He knew that his noble Friend the late Lord Lieutenant (Earl Spencer) was very sanguine on that point. His noble Friend said that these evils would be remedied by the Irish people if they were left to themselves; but his noble Friend had never given them any argument on the matter. They must accept the Bill which was now before them from the necessities of the political situation. There were, however, one or two Amendments which he trusted that House would insist upon, particularly that relating to accommodation land. But the measure as a whole they must swallow. Although they must do that, he, for one, protested against the principles which it involved, and he ventured to predict that it would not be the last of the attempts they would see—that it would not be the last flounder in this Serbonian bog of Gladstonian legislation.

Earl GRANVILLE said, he was willing to admit that their Lordships were placed in a position of difficulty in regard to the proceedings that evening. The very fact that they would have to consider Amendments which were circulated only an hour and a half before the House met was a sufficient proof of that. However, he did not think that they would be assisted by going into a discussion on Home Rule, which was not before their Lordships, or by discussing the social, political, and economical questions which had been referred to by the noble Duke in a speech which would doubtless have been admirable had the second reading of the Bill been before their Lordships. He was quite sure that they would not advance very much if they embarked upon a discussion of such subjects as had been touched upon by the noble Duke in the course of his vigorous assault upon those Amendments which the Marquess of Hartington, with the assent of his Friends in the House of Commons, and, he presumed, in the House of Lords also, rather forced than otherwise on the Government. Many of those Amendments had been suggested by his (Earl Granville's) noble and learned Friends (Lords Herschell and Fitzgerald), who in offering them had been called officious; but now that they were before their Lordships with the full recommendation of Her Majesty's Government, they on that side of the House would most heartily support them. He thought there was some ground for saying that it was something of a hardship on the whole House, in consequence of the fact that during the animated debates in that House on the Bill, the course which the Government intended to pursue, with or without consultation

with the Liberal Unionists, had been absolutely concealed from them. It was a complete farce to have debate on the second reading in Committee, and on the Report, and to delude the Irish Peers by Amendments in favour of the landlords being accepted by Her Majesty's Government, if that conduct was to be followed up by an entire reversal of policy, and by Amendments of an entirely opposite kind being forced upon the House of Commons and accepted by the Government. He really thought they had some ground to complain of the manner in which the question had been treated in that respect. The noble Duke thought the germ of this measure was to be found in the Act of 1881. He (Earl Granville) believed that that Act and the Statute which preceded it, the Act of 1870, were absolutely necessary, and that if they had not been passed things would have been absolutely worse in Ireland than they were at the present time. But the germ did not appear for the first time in 1881, but was very much stronger in 1870, when the then Government had the noble Duke entirely agreeing with them. He had really thought it right to protest against the manner in which the House had been treated, and having done that, he wished to say that he thought they had better at once proceed to work and discuss the different Amendments before them. The Bill had come back to them a very much improved measure, and he would gladly promise, for those with whom he acted, that he was ready to give the Government all the support he could in getting the Bill through.

The PRIME MINISTER and SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of Salisbury) said, the noble Earl opposite (Earl Granville) had asked their Lordships to go immediately into the consideration of the Amendments. He (the Marquess of Salisbury), however, thought that it would hardly be treating the noble Duke (the Duke of Argyll), or even the noble Earl himself, with courtesy, if he did not make a few remarks. He would not go through the speech of the noble Duke, but would venture to point out that when once the germ of an evil principle was introduced into legislation, it was impossible to get rid of it. Somehow or other, the fabric of social order had to be maintained. Somehow or other, an effort had to be made to adjudge to each man his fair rights. If departure was made from the sound system on which those results were formerly obtained, and they entered upon an unsound one, it would be necessary to develop and push on that unsound principle, in order to obtain the elementary objects for which all society existed. That could not be done with a structure once broken. They must persevere in the path on which they had unfortunately entered, and do their utmost to obtain the best and most expedient and just results that might be forthcoming. In 1881 he confessed, and in 1870 also, the then Government had entered upon what, in his judgment, was the very unwise plan of trying to place upon the State the responsibility of insuring that the relations and contracts between landlords and tenants were in conformity with equity. They departed from the principle of free contract that then existed, and made what was, in his judgment, the very great mistake of giving fixity of tenure. When they had once done that, it then became the responsibility of the State to see that those two persons, the landlord and tenant, should bear relations which were in themselves just towards each other. They had absolutely renounced the existence of free contract, and, having renounced it, they could not allow unjust and impossible relations to grow up. His answer to the noble Earl opposite was clear. It was only to repeat what he said of this Bill more than once during its passage through the House. There was a great evil to be met, a great danger to be averted. It was necessary that the land war in Ireland should cease, and the Government believed that the healthiest and best way of interfering on behalf of those who were reduced to inability to fulfil their contracts, by events which were outside their own power, was an application of the law of bankruptcy to the relations between landlord and tenant. That was the remedy which the Government, after very deep consideration, had decided to recommend, and they exhausted every effort at their command to impress that doctrine upon the House. The noble Earl asked—he did not think he had any right to do so—whether the application of that remedy was resolved upon with the knowledge and concurrence of Lord Hartington. In answer to the question he could at once say that that remedy was agreed to in concert with him, but the Government had absolutely failed to carry it. They had absolutely failed in their Lordships' House, to say nothing of the House of Commons. They had been obliged to alter the Bill again and again, because they could not induce the landlords to accept the application of the bankruptcy principle, and so much was forced upon the Government in their Lordships' House, that when the Bill came into the other House of Parliament it became evident that the application of the Bankruptcy Law which they had recommended was not a measure which they could induce the House of Commons to adopt. That being the case, they had to find some other mode by which the pressure of economical events upon the tenants could be lightened, at least during the interval which separated them from those further land measures to which the Government were pledged, and in which they believed the final solution of the Land Question in Ireland was possible. Had the Bankruptcy Clauses been accepted, the Government believed they would not only have relieved the insolvent tenant, but would also have furnished a motive to the landlord to treat with liberality and equity those to whom agricultural changes had made the rent so severe. The Bankruptcy Clauses having become impossible, it was inevitable that they should fall back upon some change of the kind recommended by the Cowper Commission, and that was the principal change now submitted to their Lordships. What the Government had recommended was, he need not say, not a revision of rents, but the substitution of a produce rent for a money rent. It was not exactly in the form recommended by the Commission; but it was much more transient, and, in his judgment, in a much more simple and salutary form. But he did not for a moment say that he preferred it to the Bill the Government submitted to the House. He would gladly have passed the Bankruptcy Clauses if the Government had had the power; but they had not the power. The Government informed their Lordships that they intended to pass a Bill which would have the effect of putting an end to evictions which we thought dangerous to the peace of Ireland. They earnestly pressed on their Lordships, and on the other House of Parliament, the mode of doing so which they thought expedient; but they certainly did not think themselves justified in abandoning a Bill which had the object he had stated in view, because they were unable to obtain the particular means of doing it which they thought most convenient. It would have been contrary to the pledges they had made. It would have led to political events, which he need not further enter upon, as they had been dwelt upon by the noble Duke in his speech; but sooner or later, at a longer or shorter interval, it would also have had this deplorable effect, that if the Government had abandoned the Bill and made no effort to lighten the burdens of the Irish tenants, which now, by extraneous circumstances, lay upon them, they would have had to face this political contingency—that some time or other a Dissolution would have taken place and an Election would have been made, in which, owing to the overwhelming pressure of a secondary controversy, the votes of the loyal people of Ulster might, for a time, have seemed to be upon the side which the Government believed to be absolutely fatal to the interests of the Empire. He had thought it best to speak out his mind upon this subject, as it seemed to him that that was the best way to meet the ordinary dangers with which politicians had to deal, and he had not heard anything to convince him that in the circumstances of extreme difficulty in which the Government had been placed they had taken other than the course which was indicated by patriotism and right in the interests of the Empire.

The Earl of ERNE said, he agreed to a great extent with what had been said by the noble Earl opposite (Earl Granville) as to the manner in which they had been treated, and he could not follow the defence offered by the noble Marquess. He believed, however, that the Bankruptcy Clauses, as amended by their Lordships, would have been a great benefit to the Irish tenants. He desired to enter his protest—because anything beyond protest was impossible—against the manner in which the Bill would, by its changes, treat a large body of men in Ireland. There was, unfortunately, a large class of small proprietors with heavily encumbered estates who would be almost ruined by the clause for the revision of the judicial rents. To them Parliament had almost been guilty of a breach of faith. By the Land Act of 1881 they were called upon to make considerable sacrifices, and their incomes were greatly reduced until, in many cases, hardly any margin was left over the charges upon their estates. He had always held that the Act of 1881, although it did not contain any statutory guarantee, yet it gave a moral guarantee to those men that that margin would be retained to them, and the judicial rents paid; but that guarantee was altogether destroyed by the Bill, for by its means the greater portion of what was left to them would be cut away. By passing the Bill, the Government had, he believed, thrown away any chance of success they might have had for the Purchase Bill; for, until they gave the Irish tenants the idea that there was some finality in their legislation, and that no more concessions could be looked for, no purchase scheme was likely to succeed, and Parliament would only be wasting time. He certainly believed the line of conduct recommended by Parliament and the Government would not be conducive to the interests of Ireland, or to the credit of this country.

The Earl of SELBORNE said, that he had no desire to stand for any long time between the House and the discussion which was about to take place, but he thought that he ought to take that opportunity of thanking the noble Marquess opposite for the manly and frank explanation of his action in this matter which he had given to the House. He certainly had agreed in principle with the original scheme of the Bill, and he had also agreed with the noble Marquess in thinking it was desirable, during the interval which must elapse before the larger measure which all parties agreed was necessary could be brought forward to do no more than the exigencies of the case made absolutely necessary, and in hoping that it would be sufficient for that purpose to deal with the cases of tenants unable to pay their rents, without fault of their own, and on whom the powers of eviction might otherwise be exercised. He had hoped that such a measure might be sufficient, and he agreed with the noble Marquess that it was not desirable to introduce into this Bill matters which could be dealt with more conveneniently in the larger measure which Her Majesty's Government intended to introduce as soon as they could do so. He had entirely agreed with the noble Marquess upon these two points—first, that the supremacy of the law should be restored in Ireland by means of another measure which had now become law; and, secondly, that an Act must be passed which would limit the right of landlords to evict, and would prevent an abuse of that power for the purpose of enforcing the payment of impossible rents, which was dangerous to the State, and calculated to strengthen disaffection, and to extend the power of the disaffection already existing. With that patriotism which Irish landlords had often displayed, they, on this occasion, mitigated their tone of objection to the Bill; but, at the same time, there could be no doubt that the manner in which they originally received the Bankruptcy Clauses was calculated to defeat that part of the scheme of the Government; and it could hardly have surprised them to find that those clauses were given up. He confessed he was strongly impressed with the force of some of the arguments against these clauses. But having failed, what was the alternative for those clauses? Were they simply to enlarge the Equitable Clause, and give power of an unlimited kind to Courts to deal with arrears? In his opinion, merely to give time for the payment of arrears would not be effectual, because the arrears would go on accumulating year by year. The Cowper Commission had arrived at the conclusion that the rents of holdings in a great part of Ireland were such that at the present prices of produce many of the tenants could not pay them; and, looking at all the circumstances of the case, he thought the plan now adopted by the Government was as just as any that could have been proposed to bridge over the interval until the larger measure of the Government was introduced and passed; for, with a rise in prices, the landlords would have the benefit, and with a fall in prices the tenants would have the benefit. The general manner in which the change was to be made freed the scheme from the objections justly urged against individual applications for a revision of rent; and the Government would have been extremely wanting to their duty if they had thrown up the Bill when they found that a larger measure of relief than they at first contemplated was desired by the loyal tenants in Ireland, because they had not been able to carry the Bankruptcy Clauses. He was as sensible as anyone of the solid grounds which there were for saying that if there had been no such legislation as that of 1870 and 1881 they might possibly have been in a worse position than that in which they now found themselves. He agreed that the legislation of 1870 had been the starting point, but if he might venture to say so, the germ of the measure of 1870, which had carried with it these later consequences, was not that which was contested at the time—namely, the question of compensation for disturbance, but that upon which everyone was agreed—the legalization of the Ulster custom. Not only Mr. Sharman-Crawford, but also Lord Mayo, in the House of Commons had continually urged the principle of that measure. When they had gone so far as to turn the statutory principle of contract into a law of tenure in accordance with customs, which in practice combined, in a manner scarcely intelligible, those two conflicting principles, it was difficult to avoid going further. Although he was very sensible of these considerations, still he would rather have cut off his hand than be a party to that measure of 1881, giving the House the reasons and assurances which he then gave, if he had known that within five years after its passing it would have been thrown over by its authors, and that the course they had now taken would be entered upon; for such action on their part made its permanent success, or whatever degree of success might otherwise have been hoped for, absolutely impossible. But that course having been entered upon by them, there was nothing now left but to make the best of the situation, and, for his part, he thought the noble Marquess at the head of the Government, under the circumstances, had done his duty bravely and patriotically in the matter.

The Earl of HOWTH said, he thought the Irish landlords had taken a very patriotic course in regard to the Bill. As far as the Liberal Unionists were concerned, they approved of the two main principles of the policy of Her Majesty's Government — namely, the Purchase Bill and the secondary Bill dealing with the removal of the evils which had become the bane of the Irish tenantry, and repairing the blots in the Bill of 1881. He feared, however, that the development which was shown by the alterations made in the Bill pointed to the fact that Her Majesty's Government had yielded to the pressure brought upon them by the National League, for they seemed to have been proposed with a desire to make the rents as low as possible before the purchase scheme was prepared. That was a great injustice to the landlords. Another fear which he had was that Her Majesty's Government was greatly in want of money to carry out their Purchase Bill. One of the chief points to which he wished to allude was the manner in which valuation with respect to the landlords' property was carried out under the Act of 1881 in Ireland. At first, there had been no difficulty; but then had come the crash caused by the fall in prices, and the whole machinery of valuation was thrown out of gear. What had been a *modus vivendi* in 1881 ceased to be so in 1886, and the consequence was that valuators came to totally different conclusions. There were the landlords' valuators, then the Judges of the Law Courts, who had estates under their supervision, and there was also the tenants' valuators, who very naturally valued in anticipation of a still greater fall in prices. The valuer of the Land Court also exercised his valuation in anticipation of a further fall. There was thus great confusion existing, and he thought that the Government might lay down some medium of valuation, for a most unjust system of valuation had been pursued. He further hoped the Government would consider the condition of the landlords of Ireland at the present time, and that after the very great concessions which had been made to the tenant, something would be done to relieve landlords of some of the heavy burdens which at present were thrown upon them, and which they were unable to bear.

Lord INCHIQUIN said, he thought it only fair that the Irish Representatives should be allowed to enter their protest against the course pursued in reference to the Bill. The measure now before the House was a totally and entirely different measure from that which had left them. The Bill was three months in that House, and they had reason to complain that during the whole of the time the Bill was before their Lordships the Government gave them no idea of what has since taken place in the Commons. He, as one of the Representatives of Ireland, was negotiating with the Government with reference to the provisions of the Bill, and they understood that the Government were carrying on negotiations with the Liberal Unionists in the same way as with Irish landlords in that House. The Bill, as it left that House, was the result of a compromise, and if there had been no such compromise, many more Amendments would have been moved. But what was his surprise when the Bill went down to the House of Commons, in the very first speech made by a Member of the Government—he believed it was Mr. Smith—it was stated that the Government would be delighted to consider any Amendments from whatever quarter of the House they might proceed. The Government, in fact, had a perfectly open mind on the subject. There was, therefore, just cause of complaint against the Government. If this was the course which the Government intended to adopt, and if they thought the Bill could not be fairly treated in that House, it would have been far better to introduce the measure in the other House. But that was not the only fault he had to find with the Government. The Bill came up on Monday last. He had anxiously waited for it; but it was only yesterday that the Bill was sent to him with the Commons' Amendments. But the omissions in the Bill as it left their Lordships were not pointed out, and it was not till to-day that he was able to compare the two Bills. With such short notice, it was not reasonable to expect the House to discuss the Amendments on the Paper. In the House of Commons a clause had been introduced for altering judicial rents, a proposal to which, over and over again, the Government said they would not consent. The Bill as it stood admitted leaseholders to the benefit of the Act of 1881, and now in the House of Commons it was declared that judicial rents fixed five years ago were unfair.

In such a state of things the leaseholders ought only to be tenants from year to year, and he thought it was very unfair that leaseholders should be admitted to the Act of 1881 at a time when prices were at their lowest, without any provision that if prices rose the landlords should be entitled to some benefit in the better prices. He hoped the Government would make some modification in that direction, for otherwise they would be doing an injustice to owners of property. He would suggest that if judicial rents were reduced, the reduction should be made contingent on payment within a reasonable time. He wished, as an Irishman, to protest against the course pursued by the Government in regard to the Bill.

Motion *agreed to.*

Commons' Amendments *considered* accordingly.

VISCOUNT DE VESCI moved an Amendment rejecting the Commons' Amendment which provided that the option of applying to have a lease broken should be limited to the tenant, and providing that the option should be extended to the landlord as well as the tenant, as it stood originally in the Bill.

Amendment *moved,* at end of Clause 1, to add ("an application to break a lease may be made to the Court by the lessor as well as by the lessee").—(*The Viscount De Vesci.*)

LORD CASTLETOWN supported the Amendment.

THE LORD PRIVY SEAL (Earl CADOGAN) said, that the proposal of the noble Viscount was that an Amendment passed in the other House should be disagreed with and that lessors as well as lessees should be given the power of applying to the Land Court under Clause 1. That clause had for its object to extend to leaseholders the benefits of the Land Act of 1881. He feared that if his noble Friend's Amendment were agreed to, and the option were given to the landlord as well as the tenant, some landlords would strive to get their tenants' leases broken, with a view to raise the rent. He trusted that their Lordships would reject the Amendment.

On Question? *Resolved* in the *negative.*

On the Motion of The LORD PRIVY SEAL, consequential Amendments made to the Commons' Amendment to Clause 1.

On the Motion of The Viscount DE VESCI, the following Amendment made, at end of Clause C, add—

("This section shall not apply to a sub-letting made by a tenant during a statutory term, nor to a sub-letting made after the passing of this Act.")

Commons' Amendments *agreed to.*

THE EARL OF DUNRAVEN, in moving an Amendment, requiring the Land Commission, in fixing fair rents, to attach to their judgment a scale of prices of agricultural produce affecting the holding in regard to which the rent was fixed, said, it was quite possible that the Act might continue in operation for a longer period of time than was at present anticipated. If the rents which were now about to be revised had had, in the first instance, such a scale attached to the judgment, it would be a great convenience. He believed that under the Act the rents about to be fixed on easier terms might, next year or the year after, be again revised, if there were a further fall in prices, and it would be very desirable in that event to know the prices upon which the rents were fixed.

Bill 218, Clause 5, page 3, line 31, Amendment *moved,* to add, as a new paragraph, at the end of words inserted by the Commons—

"The Court shall, in making an order for the fixing of a judicial rent under this section, attach thereto a scale of the prices of agricultural produce affecting the holding in regard to which such order is made, which the Court has taken into consideration, in fixing such judicial rent."—(*The Earl of Dunraven.*)

THE LORD CHANCELLOR OF IRELAND (Lord ASHBOURNE) said, the Government could not accept the Amendment, which would throw an undue burden on the Commission. There were a great many elements to be taken into account, and it was not desirable to take out one element—namely, the element of price, and require that element to be stated. He did not think it reasonable to ask the Commissioners to state one of their grounds for fixing a fair rent, for he was convinced that it would only excite a feeling of rivalry and jealousy.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY urged that if the scale were fixed and prices happened at any time to be lower than that scale, the effect of the Amendment would be to create discontent and agitation among tenants, and if prices were at any time higher than the scale fixed the scale would be detrimental to the landlords; because if the tenants in future times saw that existing prices were lower than those stated in the scale accompanying the judgment, they would agitate to have the rents lowered. The Amendment would multiply discontent and encourage litigation.

THE DUKE OF ARGYLL said, he felt that there was very much force in what had been said by the noble Marquess, and he would oppose the Amendment.

THE EARL OF DUNRAVEN withdrew the Amendment.

Amendment (by leave of the House) *withdrawn.*

LORD FITZGERALD, in moving to leave out of the eviction by registered letter clause the words "a copy of the said notice shall be published in a newspaper circulating in the district," said, the clause was complete without the sentence, which was unnecessary, and might be dangerous. He would not venture to predict what would occur where there were two papers circulating in a district; but suppose there was only one paper, and it was favourable to the tenant, they would be at the mercy of the newspaper proprietor, who might refuse to publish save at a prohibitory cost. The due publication of the notice would form a part of the landlord's title to be put into possession, and without strict proof of the statutable requirements in this respect he could not eventually recover the holding.

Amendment *moved,*

To disagree to the Commons' Amendment (Bill No. 308) in page 3, line 8, after ("lane"), to insert ("in all such cases, a copy of the said notice shall be published in a newspaper circulating in the district, and a copy shall be sent in a registered letter addressed to the tenant").—(*The Lord Fitzgerald.*)

EARL CADOGAN said, he would accept the Amendment on behalf of the Government.

Motion *agreed to.*

Commons' Amendment *disagreed to.*

THE EARL OF DUNRAVEN moved an Amendment to the Town Park Clause, striking out the provisions by which a town for the purposes of the clause was defined to be a town of over 2,000 inhabitants.

Bill No. 218, Clause 9, page 8, line 21, *moved* ("to disagree with the words inserted by the Commons.")—(*The Earl of Dunraven.*)

LORD MACNAGHTEN joined in opposing the Commons' Amendment. He had been much disappointed when the Bill came back to find how much this clause had been mangled and patched; so much so, indeed, that he was ashamed to own any connection with it. He could not even understand it. It was now contradictory and absurd; because, after stating that town parks were an accommodation to towns, it yet proceeded to deny that accommodation to the class of towns which most desired it, for the towns which most needed them were just the towns which would be deprived of them by the clause as it left the Commons. A town park was land in the vicinity of a town which was in the occupation of shopkeepers or other residents of the town, and there were certain peculiarities in regard to its tenure. Tenant-right had never been an incident of town parks; but the tenant had always been entitled to be paid compensation for his improvements. Out of the 300 witnesses examined before the Cowper Commission, only 15 alluded to the subject, and of those 15 only one would name any limit, and that limit was 20,000. Yet the Commissioners recommended a limit of 5,000. Heaven knows where they got that. The effect of the clause, as it left the Commons, would be that shopkeepers or doctors in small towns who held accommodation land could have the rent revised, and could have holdings for £100, £200, or £300, in which, at the present moment, they had no saleable interest whatever, and in which they never expected to have any saleable interest. Tenant-right did not, as he had said, exist in the case of town parks, and though the rent was a little higher than that for purely agricultural land, still the tenant had not to pay the fabulously large sums to the outgoing tenant which prevailed in regard to ordinary holdings. Mr. Litton, one of the Chief Commissioners of the Land Court, said in his evidence before the Royal Commission that he thought the holdings known as town parks were of "enormous advantage to small towns," and by small towns places with a population of from 500 to 2,000 were just those which were meant. Yet the Amendment made in the House of Commons would destroy town parks just in these very towns. Another effect of this Amendment would be to confer on the present tenants of town parks a tenant-right which they had never possessed, and which they would, in many cases, be able to sell for some hundreds of pounds. The only people who wished to abolish these town parks were those whose object was the spoliation of the landlord. He was not advocating the cause of the Irish landlords; but he might take the liberty of doubting whether the spoliation of the landlords was in itself so admirable and excellent a thing that it was worth while, in order to attain that object, to inflict this very serious injury upon Irish country towns.

VISCOUNT DE VESCI said, he wished to point out that owners of land near towns often let land to agricultural labourers on easy terms, and that the labourers, in default of such provision, would be compelled to live in the towns themselves. The result was that many towns contained less than 2,000 inhabitants when, but for the liberality of the landlords to the labourers, they would contain more. It was hard in such circumstances that the rights of the owners of town parks should be diminished. Had they not acted liberally towards the labourers, the latter must have swelled the town population, with the result of excluding the occupation land from the operation of this measure.

LORD FITZGERALD hoped that the Government would yield upon this question. If the clause, as it left the Commons, were agreed to, it would place an iron band around about 240 small towns in Ireland, including Lismore, Cootehill, Castleblayney, Belturbet, Ballybay, and Antrim, and would prevent the expansion and improvement of those towns.

THE DUKE OF ARGYLL said, that these town parks were not only an advantage to the landowner, but to the community. He was in favour of supporting the rights derived from custom, as from written contract; but, in the case of town parks, there never had been asserted on the part of the tenant any custom or right to the holding. They were, in fact, allotments given out for the benefit of the people, and very often rich people competed for them in the open market. By the Amendment under consideration, the Land Court would be empowered to deprive landowners of the value of their accommodation land, in favour of the men who might happen to be in possession of it at a particular time. These men would be able to sell their rights in open market, not for the advantage of the Irish people, but for their own advantage, and to realize the additional value which attached to land near a town. There was no great public interest to be served by agreeing to this clause; indeed, there was a great public interest adverse to it—namely, that the growth of the towns would be checked by the clause. In a particular case in the neighbourhood of Belfast, the Act of 1881 was having that effect; for he had a letter from a landed proprietor in the neighbourhood of Belfast, who stated that that town could not be increased in his direction because some small tenants under the Act of 1881 would not allow their interests to be bought. Public interest demanded that the Amendment should be expunged.

EARL SPENCER supported the Commons' Amendment, which he should be sorry to see disagreed to without something being said in its favour. This was a matter upon which the holders of town parks felt very strongly, and there was an urgent demand for their inclusion within the Act of 1881. Even long before he left Ireland, that had made itself felt, and there had been bitter complaints against their exclusion. At one time, Mr. Gladstone's Government contemplated the appointment of a Committee to inquire into the subject. It was unjust to charge an exorbitant rent for these holdings, and this clause would enable a fair rent to be fixed. It would not be supposed that the Land Commissioners would fix a purely agricultural value on these farms; but the tenants on these farms should have the opportunity of having the present rents revised, and, no doubt, the Land Court would consider what the proper accommodation rent ought to be. He quite agreed that if the land was likely to be valuable for building, in consequence of its nearness to a large town, that ought to be taken into consideration; but in the Act of 1881 there was power to resume land for building purposes. The Amendment in "another place" was a compromise on the part of the Government. Under all the circumstances, he hoped that the Government would consider carefully before they assented to the Commons' Amendment being expunged. He did not think it would do injustice to the landowners, or he would not agree to it; but his belief was that it would only give the Court a power of fixing a proper rent for accommodation land; and if the land was building land, it gave power to allow it to be used for the public good.

The Earl of SELBORNE said, that it seemed to be assumed by his noble Friend that the sole operation of the Land Act of 1881 was the fixing of a fair rent, whereas there were other statutory conditions—fixity of tenure and free sale—conditions inapplicable to this kind of land. These town parks were accommodation land, let for the convenience of the occupiers of houses in towns; and to place them on a footing applicable to agricultural land unconnected with those houses was manifestly unreasonable. The clause as it now stood did not abolish town parks altogether; it made a distinction between towns under and towns over 2,000 inhabitants, according to the last Parliamentary Census, so that the limit of 2,000 would be a fluctuating one, and a town which had now more than 2,000 inhabitants was to be treated as if it had less, because it had less six years ago. Was it not desirable that the number of considerable towns in Ireland, at present so small, should be increased? But the limit now placed in the Bill would tend to discourage the growth of towns just under the 2,000. It was because it was desirable to develop towns that, by the clause as it stood, the Land Act was prevented from applying to town parks when the population exceeded 2,000, unless it were made clear that no obstacle to the improvement of the town or inconvenience to the inhabitants would result from so applying it. This was on the face of the clause, as it now stood; and yet it was proposed to disregard all those considerations in the case of the smaller towns, in which they might often be of more importance than in the larger. As for the argument from the recommendation of the Commission, he could attach no weight to that, when it was not supported either by evidence or by reason. That recommendation was not law; but the House was enacting a law, and it was their duty to do what was just and consistent and reasonable in the matter.

Earl FORTESCUE said, that, in his opinion, the reasons urged by the noble Earl (Earl Spencer) in support of this change introduced in "another place" were inconsistent with each other. The special characteristic of leases was duration for a term of years, that of town parks was their being for the most part let annually. The process of resumption of land for building purposes under the Act was notoriously a troublesome one.

The Marquess of SALISBURY said, he was not at all learned in the law of town parks; but he was sure that if the House went to a Division, there could be little doubt that there would be a large majority in favour of adhering to the clause as it originally left the House of Lords. He did not think, so far as he could judge, that there was very much to be said for this numerical limit. He was much struck by an observation of his noble and learned Friend (Lord Macnaghten), that any authority derived from the Cowper Commission in this regard was not to be esteemed of great value, because it was merely evolved from their own internal consciousness, and did not depend upon any evidence that they received. He fancied that the idea of a numerical limit proceeded entirely from the Cowper Commission, that it was recommended to the House of Commons on that ground, and the Government undoubtedly did in debate accept as a compromise the limit of 2,000 inhabitants. He did not, however, think, on consideration, that that precise limit could be adhered to, as the number was to be drawn from the last Parliamentary Census — he imagined that that would mean the last Parliamentary Census before the time when the matter was submitted to the judgment of the Commissioners. If that was the case, of course a town would be liable to go in and out of the restriction as town parks according as its population altered with each succeeding Census, and people who had made their arrangements on the basis of one population might find themselves remitted to another rule of law for another population. Besides, in towns of the limits named, it might be very difficult to decide where the town ended. These towns ran out into suburbs and villas, and the fixing of a numerical limit would tend to agitation and considerable litigation. Under all the circumstances, he would accept the Motion of his noble Friend behind him, that the words should be struck out.

Motion *agreed to;* Commons' Amendment *disagreed to.*

Earl CADOGAN moved to amend a Commons' Amendment to Clause 19, to take from a High Court the power of making a temporary prospective abatement of rent.

Bill No. 218, page 14, line 7, moved in Clause D, to leave out from the first ("rent") to ("due") in the next line, and insert instead thereof ("for the time being.")—(*The Lord Privy Seal.*)

Lord ASHBOURNE said, that the sole object of the Government was to confine the jurisdiction of the Court in dealing with arrears; but as the words of the clause were not particularly clear, he hoped that the Amendment would not be opposed.

Amendment *agreed to.*

Earl CADOGAN moved, that the Commons' Amendments as far as the New Clause dealing with the temporary adjustment of judicial rents be agreed to.

Moved, "That the Amendments made by the Commons, as far as Clause E (Temporary adjustment of judicial rents) be agreed to."—(*The Lord Privy Seal.*)

Lord EMLY said, he must protest against the provisions of the clause, and would urge that some Proviso ought to be brought into the clause, stating that any judicial rent fixed during a time of exceptionally low prices should not continue for more than three years. The principle involved in the clause showed that a gross injustice might be done to the landlord. He protested against fixing rents in these uncertain times for 15 years.

Earl CADOGAN said, that a temporary remission of judicial rents during a period of three years, as proposed by the Bill, was a different thing from a permanent provision for a periodical revision of those rents according to a scale of prices, as was proposed by the noble Lord, and Her Majesty's Government could not accept the noble Lord's proposal.

The Earl of KIMBERLEY said, that the Bill as it now stood provided for the alteration of the judicial rents during the next three years. That appeared to him to be a very important germ which had been introduced for the first time into the law of landlord and tenant by this Bill, and before long that germ would develop into a full-grown tree. No one could believe that when the three years had expired, the old rents would be revived, and indeed, as an English landlord, he was of opinion that rents in the future would fall still further instead of rising. He did not blame the Government for making the provisions of this Bill temporary; on the contrary, when an experiment of this kind was attempted to be made, it was better that it should be of a tentative character. He, however, wished to express his opinion most emphatically that by consenting to this provision being introduced into this Bill, Parliament would have laid down the permanent principle that in the future there must be a periodical revision of rents. He was glad the Government had listened to the representations which had been made on this subject in the House of Commons. It was his firm conviction that the principle of produce rents, having been once adopted, it would be impossible hereafter to resist its further application.

The Marquess of SALISBURY said, the proposal was an alternative to the better plan of the Bankruptcy Clauses, and the consequences which must flow from the adoption of the principle of a periodical revision of rents was fully in the minds of the Govenment when they agreed to the proposal. It was a harmless germ because it was not unexampled. It had been tried in England and in Scotland under circumstances which, with respect to the changeability of prices, differed not very largely from those in which they now found themselves. It amounted practically to a return to the old practice of paying rent, not in money, but in produce. If it should eventually become the rule that money rents should become produce rents, variable from year to year according to a sliding scale of produce prices, he did not think that it would be injurious to the community or unjust either to the landlord or the tenant; and, indeed, upon the whole, that would be the sounder principle. Therefore he did not think they were committing themselves to any germ of whose ultimate growth they would have any reason to complain. As to the yearly valuation, that was an inevitable necessity when the State was made a determining power in the relations between landlords and tenants. Dealing with a landlord so weak as the State, and tenants so utterly without capital as the Irish tenants, there was something absolutely absurd in fixing a 15 years' term for the rents, which at any moment might be disturbed by an unexpected accident arising out of the variable circumstances of the case. Therefore he could not admit that they were running any dangerous risk in substituting a produce for a coin rent, and he utterly disclaimed the idea that the clause committed them to any germ whose growth there was reason to fear.

The Earl of DUNRAVEN said, that they were told that this Act would be practically superseded by some large measure of land purchase. That might be so; but that scheme might not be passed as soon as seemed to be hoped. The condition of present tenants was that they would be liable to have their rents looked into in 1888 and 1889; and he could not see why all classes should not be put on the same terms.

The Earl of HOWTH said, he thought that owners of leasehold property were entitled to the consideration of the Legislature. It was well known that before 1870, leases had been considered the greatest boon that a tenant could seek for, and the owners of leasehold property were held up as examples.

Lord FITZGERALD said, he thought that the matter which the noble Lord (Lord Emly) had specially noticed was one from which hardship and injustice might arise, and that it ought to be taken into consideration. He understood the noble Lord to point out that the 130,000 leaseholders now brought under the Act would in great part have their rents now settled at a time of the lowest depression and for a term of 15 years. This was hard indeed on the lessors. It had hitherto escaped notice, and he entreated the consideration of the Government.

Motion *agreed to.*

The Marquess of Salisbury

Lord CASTLETOWN moved an Amendment providing that the tenants whose rents had been fixed by mutual agreement between landlord and tenant should not be subject to abatement under this clause, said, he thought it most unfair that where a landlord had come to some amicable arrangement with his tenant, this arrangement should be subject to abatement under this Bill merely because such arrangement happened to have been ratified by the Land Court.

Lord ASHBOURNE said, that rents were judicial rents whether they had been fixed by the Court or ratified by the Court after agreement between landlord and tenant. On many properties these agreements had been arrived at upon the basis of reductions made and rents fixed by the Land Courts on neighbouring estates, or on part of the same estate; and since these latter were to be subject to abatement, it would not be logically defensible to exclude the former.

Amendment *negatived.*

Earl CADOGAN moved an Amendment to insert in Clause E, in the second paragraph, the following words:—

"So that the rent fixed under the provisions of this section shall differ by the difference in prices as aforesaid in the respective years."

In Clause E (inserted by the Commons), after ("and eighty-six respectfully") in the second paragraph of the Clause, *moved* to insert—

("So that the rent fixed under the provisions of this section shall differ by the difference in prices as aforesaid in the respective years").—(*The Lord Pivy Seal.*)

Earl SPENCER believed that it would be unwise to confine the Land Commissioners within the rigid limits of this Amendment. He did not think it right to tie down the Land Commissioners by requiring them to make an alteration in rent exactly equal to the difference which had taken place in prices. He would illustrate his meaning by an example. Take a farm the gross produce of which at the higher prices was worth £500. The cost of production might also vary; but it would not vary to anything like the same degree as the value of the products, and it might remain unchanged. For the sake of argument he supposed the case where the cost of production remained the same; he put that at £300, when the gross produce came to £500. That left £200 to be divided between the landlord for rent and the tenant for profit. He would take in this case the rent at £100. A fall in prices equal to 20 per cent came; what was the effect of that? The gross produce would fall to £400, and, the cost of production remaining the same, that would leave £100 for rent, &c. If the Amendment of the noble Earl were carried into law, the Land Commissioners would have to reduce the rent by 20 per cent. That would give the landlord £80 for rent, and leave only £20 for the tenant. He thought that a most unjust operation, and he believed it was essential not to tie the Commissioners' hands so absolutely that they must deal with the rents under consideration in this way, and this way alone. He understood that the clause, as it originally stood, would work in the following way. There might be two farms of exactly the same size, quality, and condition side by side. Call one A, the other B. The rent of A was fixed in 1881 or 1882. The rent of B was fixed this year. According to his view, the Commissioners would alter for this year, the rent of farm A to the same as the rent they had just fixed for farm B. That would be a just and proper arrangement. He did not know whether the Commissioners had regard to the considerations to which he had referred as to the relative deduction to be made in the rent and the fall in prices; but if they took these into consideration in the one case, they ought not to apply a different rule in the second case.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY said, he thought that the Amendment was one that was distinctly favourable to the tenant. It was his opinion that they ought to adhere to the strict principle of a produce rent.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY said, that the Bill did not establish the principle of a produce rent. He looked upon the Amendment as being too restrictive.

EARL FORTESCUE held that it was very desirable that the Land Commissioners should be supplied with a principle for their guidance when fixing rents. He had in vain protested against the Bill of 1881 not laying down any. The first Land Commissioners had announced none for the guidance of the Sub-Commissioners and the information of the public, so no one knew what to expect, and voluntary agreements were much less resorted to in consequence.

On Question? Their Lordships *divided*:—Contents 39; Not-Contents 17: Majority 22.

Resolved in the *affirmative*.

THE EARL OF DUNRAVEN moved to add to the New Clause an additional sub-section—

> "The Land Commission in publishing such orders shall also publish a scale of prices of agricultural produce in the area to which such order refers, showing the principle on which, having regard to such prices, they have made such order."

Bill 218, cl. 23, p. 16, line 16, *moved*, to insert a new sub-section.—(*The Earl of Dunraven.*)

LORD ASHBOURNE said, he hoped the Amendment would not be pressed, for it made no improvement on the clause, and would simply raise elements of rivalry, jealousy, heartburnings, and disagreeabilities.

THE EARL OF KILMOREY said, he thought that where there was no appeal the publication asked for was not unreasonable.

Amendment *negatived*.

LORD CASTLETOWN moved to confine the abatement to any gale of rent "which shall be paid at the time when the same is ordinarily payable or within 30 days afterwards, but not further or otherwise."

In Clause E (inserted by the Commons), at the end of paragraph 2 of the Clause, after ("Land Commission") *moved* to insert ("in respect of any gale of such rent which shall be paid at the time when the same is ordinarily payable, or within thirty days afterwards, but not further or otherwise").—(*The Lord Castletown.*)

LORD ASHBOURNE said, he could not accept the Amendment. The words "ordinarily payable" would lead to much confusion and contention, for the time of payment varied very much on different estates.

On Question? Their Lordships *divided*:—Contents 20; Not-Contents 40: Majority 20.

Resolved in the *negative*.

Earl CADOGAN moved to add, after ("Land Commission") at the end of the second paragraph of the Clause the words—

"This section shall not apply to any rent fixed or revised upon appeal or rehearing by the Land Commission subsequent to the first day of January, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-six."

Amendment *moved*,

Bill No. 218, page 16, line 2, in New Clause E after ("Land Commission") at the end of paragraph 2 of the Clause to add ("this section shall not apply to any rent fixed or revised upon appeal or rehearing by the Land Commission subsequent to the first day of January, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-six").—(*The Lord Privy Seal.*)

The Earl of KIMBERLEY asked if, on an appeal, the Land Commission would not be ruled by the prices existing at the time the judicial rent was fixed, or at the time the appeal was heard?

Lord ASHBOURNE said, that the Land Commission considered the prices at the time the appeal was heard.

Amendment *agreed to.*

Lord FITZGERALD, in moving to add these words at the end of the Clause—

"The powers and duties conferred and imposed by this section shall be exercised by the three Commissioners, formerly the Land Commission, and shall not be delegated to or exercised by any Sub-Commission or Sub-Commissioner, or any other body or person,"

said, he wished to make it clear that the power could only be exercised by the Land Commission.

Moved to add,

At the end of Clause E, Bill 218, page 16, line 25—("The powers and duties conferred and imposed by this section shall be exercised by the three Commissioners formerly the Land Commission, and shall not be delegated to or exercised by any Sub-Commission or Sub-Commissioner, or any other body or person").—(*The Lord Fitzgerald.*)

Lord ASHBOURNE said, he had no objection to make to the object which his noble and learned Friend had in view; but, in his opinion, it was altogether unnecessary, for it was already quite clear, by Section 43 of the Act of 1881, that the powers conferred by the section must be exercised by the Land Commissioners themselves, and could not be delegated to any other body. There was no possibility of any mistake in the matter.

Lord MACNAGHTEN said, he was very glad to hear that strong expression of opinion, for he thought there was a great doubt in the matter. If the Amendment were inserted it would avert a great deal of alarm. What possible harm could arise from putting these words in the Bill? They would constitute a Parliamentary declaration on the point.

Earl CADOGAN said, he had no objection to inserting the words. No better reason could be given for the adoption of the Amendment than the doubts of the two noble and learned Lords.

Amendment *agreed to.*

The Earl of KILMOREY, in moving to disagree with the Commons in the omission of Clause 19, which contained special provisions as to the constitution of the Land Commission for the purposes of hearing appeals and rehearing cases, said, he contended that no good reason had been given in the House of Commons for the omission of this clause, and he begged to ask his noble Friends on the Front Bench whether they could give the House some good reason?

Moved, "To disagree to the Amendment made by the Commons, leaving out Clause 19."—(*The Earl of Kilmorey.*)

Earl CADOGAN said, he was afraid that his noble Friend would not consider the reason he had to give a very good one. It was, however, that it would be absolutely impossible to pass this clause in the House of Commons, and therefore he could not recommend their Lordships to press it. At that period of the Session it would be impossible to re-open the question of the constitution of the Court of Appeal.

Lord EMLY said, that by the omission of the clause a gross act of injustice would be done to the Irish landlords, and he thought that as the Government were inflicting heavy penalties upon them they ought not to refuse the restoration of this clause. It was but a common act of justice, and no valid reason had been given why the clause should not be re-inserted. He protested against the argument of the Lord Privy Seal, in view of the fact that they were dealing with properties of enormous value in Ireland.

On Question? Their Lordships *divided:*—Contents 24; Not-Contents 31: Majority 7.

Resolved in the *negative.*

LORD CASTLETOWN then moved to disagree with the Commons in the omission of Clause 20, which dealt with procedure on appeal.

Moved, "To disagree to the Amendment made by the Commons, leaving out Clause 20."—(*The Lord Castletown.*)

THE EARL OF KILMOREY said, he did not know if the temper of the House of Commons would be the same to-morrow as it was when the clause was struck out.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY said, that personally he had no objection to the Motion, but he could not answer for what the other House would do in the matter.

Motion *agreed to;* Clause, as amended, *restored* to the Bill.

VISCOUNT DE VESCI moved that the Commons' Amendment striking out Clause 21 (Remission of Rates) be disagreed from.

Moved, "To disagree to the Amendment made by the Commons, leaving out Clause 21."—(*The Viscount De Vesci.*)

LORD ASHBOURNE said, no doubt the circumstances commanded their sympathies; but he must point out that if the rates were remitted in respect of unlet farms, other farms belonging to the landlord would require to be more heavily rated in order to make up the amount of the local rates, so that no practical relief would be afforded. The subject dealt with by the clause was of a very controversial character, and its re-insertion would probably lead to prolonged debate and a great expenditure of time with small practical results.

EARL FORTESCUE said, he thought that the Amendment of the Commons laid open a great temptation to giving extravagant relief to evicted tenants, as the whole rate levied on unoccupied land *ex hypothesi* come from the landlord, in addition to all rates on holdings under £4. Land League Guardians would be encouraged vindictively to squander rates, hardly any of which in some Unions would be paid by tenants. Everything should not be conceded to the demoralizing and unpatriotic body which was so largely dominant in Ireland.

THE EARL OF SELBORNE said, he thought that the question was not merely one of abstract justice. If that were the question, he certainly did not think that a man who could not get rent for his land ought to be rated as if he could get it. But, as a clause as to rating was really a money clause, he thought, on the whole, that it would be better to acquiesce, as to reject the Amendment would necessarily lead to difficulties "elsewhere."

Motion *negatived.*

Clause 24 (Power of Court to stay eviction).

THE EARL OF DUNRAVEN moved to omit the words, "any person" and insert "landlord." He thought that as this was a Land Bill it ought to be restricted to debts arising out of dealings connected with the land. By the Motion ordinary trade debts were excluded.

Bill 218, page 16, line 28, *moved* to leave out ("any person") and insert ("landlord").—(*The Earl of Dunraven.*)

THE EARL OF SELBORNE opposed the Amendment; and said that the rent due to the landlord was quite as justly due as any other debt.

Amendment *negatived.*

LORD FITZGERALD moved an Amendment empowering the County Court to deal with arrears when landlord and tenant failed to come to an agreement.

Bill 218, page 16, line 38, after the words in Commons Amendment ("agreed on between the parties") *moved* to insert ("or in default of such agreement as shall be settled by the Court").—(*The Lord Fitzgerald.*)

THE EARL OF SELBORNE opposed the Amendment, on the ground that it would give to the County Court powers which ought only to be exercised in the case of bankrupty.

EARL SPENCER said, he hoped that the Amendment would be accepted. He held that if the County Court was capable of adjudicating with reference to the question of instalments, it was also capable of deciding what arrears should be paid. It was but fair that arrears which had accrued under a rent which was too high should be subjected to revision. He might point out that this Amendment was proposed and seconded in the other House by two Members of the

Unionist Party The Tellers for it on the Division were two Liberal Unionists, one of them being an eminent lawyer; and Lord Randolph Churchill had declared that failure to deal with the question of arrears might mean the failure of the Bill. He appealed to the Government, before it was too late, to accede to the Amendment. This was a Bill for dealing with excessive rents. There was no question of the other debts being unjust or unfair. Therefore he did not see the logic of the argument that because it was just to deal with the arrears of rents which were too high, it was necessary to deal with other debts as to which there was no complaint at all. The other debts might be loans from the bankers, or they might be butchers' bills—though as far as the small Irish farmers were concerned these would hardly exist—or bakers' bills, and there was no question at all of those prices being too high. With regard to the Bankruptcy Clauses, there had been no prospect of coming to any compromise; and, therefore, the only thing to do now was to press Her Majesty's Government to consider the Amendment moved by his noble and learned Friend. He believed that they would thereby be doing a great act of prudence on their part, and one which would be only an act of justice. If they did not do so, he feared that a large number of tenants in Ireland would not get the benefits which were expected to be given to them. He hoped, for the sake of the peace of Ireland, and for the success of their measure, that the Government would reconsider the matter, and accept the Amendment which had been moved by his noble and learned Friend.

The Earl of DUNRAVEN said, he had an Amendment on the Paper somewhat similar. He therefore trusted that the Government would consider whether they could not accept the whole of the Amendment of the noble and learned Lord, and thus enable the Court to arrange some reasonable composition with regard to arrears in the event of the landlord and tenant not agreeing. If the Government did not accept it, he hoped the noble and learned Lord would press his Amendment to a Division. He felt perfectly convinced that the clause in its present form would operate very harshly to the tenants and injuriously to the landlords also.

Lord MACNAGHTEN said, that in all the circumstances of the case, if his noble and learned Friend (Lord Fitzgerald) went to a Division he would vote with him. He believed that without the Amendment injustice would be done to many tenants.

Lord ASHBOURNE said, this was a question which was surrounded by considerable difficulty, and one which had already been very fully discussed. It was an Amendment which was not framed to do fair justice all round, and therefore it would not be accepted having reasonable regard to the interests affected. It was an attempt to provide not bankruptcy or composition, but merely to give the Court the power of freeing the tenant from his obligations to his landlord without dealing with the claims of other creditors.

Earl GRANVILLE said, the noble and learned Lord opposite (Lord Ashbourne) had objected to the Amendment, because it put the landlord on a different footing from other creditors. But that principle had been adopted in the crofters' case. He did not believe that any just landlord would be affected by the Amendment, as such a one would not allow the tenant to be crushed under his arrears when the rent had been partly remitted.

The Marquess of SALISBURY said, that there was one broad and very good reason why Her Majesty's Government should not dig up the past in the matter of these arrears, and that was the one that was afforded by the action of the noble Lords who now blamed the Government for following the example which they themselves had set in the previous Irish Land Bill. It was quite a mistake to suppose that they had yielded in the House of Commons what they had refused to yield to the noble and learned Lord (Lord Herschell) and the noble Earl (Earl Granville) in the House of Lords—namely, to single out the landlord for special treatment to his disadvantage. It was absolute injustice that when a tenant owed a landlord, say, £200 arrears, a debt upon which the landlord counted, and which he had no reason to believe would be interfered with, to provide for the reduction of such rents, and thereby prevent the landlord from fulfilling his own obligations. They were proceeding upon the same principle with regard to arrears which the noble Lords opposite had acted on in 1881. When noble Lords opposite carried their Land Bill they never attempted to touch arrears of rent. In that case, they gave largely out of the surplus Church funds then at their disposal.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY said, he would ask whether, having a practical object in view, and great sacrifices having been made, they were going to spoil and to destroy the Bill, and probably frustrate the whole of the good it would do, on account of this supposed injustice with regard to a particular set of arrears? The problem was there, and they had to face it as practical men, and if some such provision were not inserted, there was a grave danger that they would fail to carry out the object which they had in view in passing the Bill. He appealed to them not to allow the object of the Bill to be marred by omitting to deal with this question of arrears.

On Question? Their Lordships *divided*:—Contents 18; Not-Contents 40: Majority 22.

CONTENTS.

St. Albans, D.

Granville, E.
Kimberley, E.
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Gordon, V. (*E. Aberdeen.*)
Oxenbridge, V.
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Acton, L.
FitzGerald, L. [*Teller.*]
Houghton, L.
Kenry, L. (*E. Dunraven and Mount-Earl*) [*Teller.*]
Kinnaird, L.
Macnaghten, L.
Monkswell, L.
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Thring, L.
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NOT-CONTENTS.

Halsbury, L. (*L. Chancellor.*)
Cranbrook, V. (*L. President.*)
Cadogan, E. (*L. Privy Seal.*)

Buckingham and Chandos, D.

Abercorn, M. (*D. Abercorn.*)
Bristol, M.
Salisbury, M.

Mount Edgcumbe, E. (*L. Steward.*)
Lathom, E. (*L. Chamberlain.*)
Camperdown, E.
de Montalt, E.
Doncaster, E. (*D. Buccleuch and Queensberry.*)
Fortescue, E.
Kilmorey, E.
Onslow, E.
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Selborne, E.
Waldegrave, E.

Cross, V.

Ardilaun, L.
Ashbourne, L.
Castletown, L.
Clanwilliam, L. (*E. Clanwilliam.*)
De L'Isle and Dudley, L.
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Foxford, L. (*E. Limerick.*) [*Teller.*]
Harris, L.
Hopetoun, L. (*E. Hopetoun.*)
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Kintore, L. (*E. Kintore.*) [*Teller.*]
Minster, L. (*M. Conyngham.*)
Ranfurly, L. (*E. Ranfurly.*)
Rowton, L.
Stanley of Alderley, L.
Stanley of Preston, L.
Stewart of Garlies, L. (*E. Galloway.*)
Sudeley, L. (*E. Arran.*)
Ventry, L.
Wemyss, L (*E. Wemyss.*)
Wigan, L. (*E. Crawford and Balcarres.*)

Resolved in the *negative.*

The rest of the Commons' Amendments *agreed to*, with Amendments, and with consequential Amendments to the Bill; and a Committee appointed to prepare reasons to be offered to the Commons for the Lords disagreeing to certain of their Amendments: The Committee to meet *forthwith.*

INDIA (NORTH WEST PROVINCES)—THE ARNIGHAD EXPROPRIATION.

MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS.

LORD STANLEY OF ALDERLEY, in rising to ask the Secretary of State for India, Whether he can give any information as to the result of the inquiry into the Arnighad expropriation and events connected therewith; and to move for a Copy of the Resolution of the Lieutenant Governor of the North West Provinces on the judgment of Sir W. Comer Petheram in the Laidman-Hearsey trial, said, there were two propositions which he wished to submit to the House, and which he hoped the Secretary of State for India would admit the truth of. The first was, that the wrongful acquisition of a small property by Members of an Administration was more criminal than the wrongful acquisition by a neighbour, because the latter acted under the temptation of personal interest, which was absent in similar wrongful acts by Members of an Administration, whose only motive, unless they were entirely misinformed on the subject, must be a preference for high-handed injustice. That criminality varied with the amount of temptation was shown by the general opinion, and the law of some countries, in the case of a starving man who takes bread from a baker's shop. The second proposition was that a much greater amount of ill-will and disaffection to the Government was caused by a wrongful act of the Administration than by the unrestrained wrongful act of private persons. The first duty of Members of an Administration was to protect their subjects, and if, instead of doing that, they themselves dispossessed a man of his property, the whole body of subjects became apprehensive that their turn might come next. The conduct of such officials was like that of sheep-dogs, which worry the sheep they were intended to protect from the wolves. On the last occasion the Secretary of State had said the Arnighad Zemindars had no case, nor defect of procedure to complain of, because the High Court had given them no redress. He (Lord Stanley of Alderley) had as much confidence as the Secretary of State in the High Courts, and he urged that after the manner in which Sir W. Comer Petheram had from the Bench described the case of the Arnighad Zemindars, it was clear that their case had not been before, and had not been heard by, any High Court. He had sent to the Under Secretary at the India Office copies of letters from the Hindoo lawyer employed by the Arnighad Zemindars, which showed how he had thrown up their case because they had no more money to give him beyond the 50 rupees which they gave to him at first. Since these Zemindars had been kept out of the High Court, the Secretary of State would only be doing justice if he ordered a new and independent inquiry, or if he sent the case before a High Court. With regard to the matter of the costs given against Mr. Laidman, which had been refunded to him by order of the Lieutenant Governor, since he had spoken of this in the House he had been informed by a retired Madras civilian that this had been done in accordance with a rule of the Service, and on further inquiry it appeared that this rule was not absolute, but the repayment of costs depended on the circumstances of the case and the discretion of the Government; and as it had been judicially established that bad language had been used in the Small Causes Court, Captain Hearsey, who had been the means of checking the use of such bad language, and who had won the verdict, was equally, if not more, entitled to have his costs refunded to him. For unless the Laidman-Hearsey trial was considered as a means adopted for arriving at the truth, and analogous to the offer recently made by Her Majesty's Government to the Parnellites to prosecute *The Times*, it must be looked upon as a malicious prosecution; and he would then ask the Secretary of State to consider whether a rule should be maintained that encouraged litigation among members of the Civil Service at the public expense in lieu of independent inquiry by the Government? A Hindoo newspaper, *The Reis and Rayyet* of June 25, quoted *The Pioneer* as having stated that the Secretary of State had given orders for Captain Hearsey's costs to be returned to him; and he (Lord Stanley of Alderley) hoped the Secretary of State would be able either to confirm this, or to state whether such orders had been given by the Government of India. He would conclude by moving for the Resolution of Sir A. Lyall on the judgment of Sir W. Comer Petheram, whenever it was no longer *sub judice*. If the Secretary of State should refuse to lay this document on the Table of the House and negatived the Motion, it would be looked upon as an admission that the document would not bear the light, and was such as should not have been written by the Lieutenant Governor upon the judicial action of the Chief Justice of the High Court of the Province.

Moved, "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty for copy of the Resolution of the Lieutenant Governor of the North-West Provinces on the judgment of Sir W. Comer Petheram in the Laidman - Hearsey trial."—(*The Lord Stanley of Alderley.*)

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Viscount CROSS): I have received no further communication from India on this subject since I last made a statement in answer to the noble Lord, nor am I able to inform him what steps, if any, the Viceroy has taken in the matter. As the noble Lord is aware, I have reason to know that Captain Hearsey has sent a Petition to the Government of India for transmission to me; but no such Petition has reached me. The measure, therefore, still rests with the Government of India. With regard to the Resolution of the Government of the North-West Provinces referred to by the noble Lord, such document as is described would necessarily be of a confidential nature, and could not be produced without the consent of the Government of India.

LORD STANLEY OF ALDERLEY asked whether the noble Viscount would be able to give an answer next Session?

VISCOUNT CROSS said, that that depended upon the Government of India.

On Question? *Resolved* in the *negative.*

BOILER REGISTRY AND INSPECTION BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to make better provision for the safety and safe working of boilers—Was *presented* by The Lord Stanley of Preston; read 1ª. (No. 229.)

DEEDS OF ARRANGEMENT (NO. 2) BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to provide for the registration of deeds of arrangement, assignments, and composition—Was *presented* by The Lord Chancellor; read 1ª. (No. 230.)

IRISH LAND LAW BILL [H.L.]

Report from the Committee of the reasons to be offered to the Commons for the Lords disagreeing to certain of their amendments; read, and *agreed to;* and a message sent to the Commons to return the said Bill with amendments and reasons.

House adjourned at a quarter before One o'clock A.M. till a quarter past Four o'clock P.M.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 11*th August,* 1887.

MINUTES.]—NEW WRIT ISSUED—*For* the County of Carlow, *v.* John Aloysius Blake, esquire, deceased.

SUPPLY—*considered in Committee*—CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES; CLASS III.—LAW AND JUSTICE, Vote 1.

Postponed Resolution [August 8] *further considered,* and *agreed to.*

PUBLIC BILLS—*First Reading*—Trinidad and Tobago * [368]; British Settlements * [369].

Second Reading—Labourers' Allotments * [329]; Public Works Loans * [364].

Report of Select Committee—Bankruptcy Courts (Ireland) [No. 278]; Temporary Dwellings [No. 279].

Committee—Report—Friendly Societies Act (1875) Amendment (No. 3) * [353]; Conveyancing (Scotland) Acts Amendment * [270].

Committee—Report—Third Reading—Lieutenancy Clerks Allowances * [274], and *passed.*

QUESTIONS.

INLAND REVENUE—OCCASIONAL GAME LICENCES.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, If there is any reason to believe that there is considerable neglect to take out game licences by persons who have only one or two days occasional shooting given them in the course of a season; and, whether, inasmuch as the shortest term for which a licence can now be obtained is for 14 days at a minimum cost of £1, arrangements could be made, with probable advantage to the Revenue, for the issue at post offices of single day or week licences for sums so moderate that the amount could not operate as a temptation to evade the law?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): There is reason to believe that there are a certain number of cases of neglect to take out game licences. It is the fact that the shortest period for which such a licence can be taken out is 14 days, and that the cost is £1. The result of allowing licences to be taken out for a fortnight only has not been very encouraging, the number of such licences being only 5,000, as against some 60,000 for the longer period. This being so, I am not sure that much advantage to the Revenue would arise from issuing licences for even shorter periods at lower sums. But I will consider the matter. In no case could anything be done with regard to it before the Budget of next year.

DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR OFFICERS—REPLIES OF CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, If replies have now been received from the Chambers of Commerce and other Commercial Bodies, to whom an invitation was addressed last year to indicate in what way Her Majesty's Diplomatic and Consular Officers could best further the interests of British trade abroad; if any new Instructions have, in consequence, been issued; and if, in such case, they can be laid upon the Table of the House?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): The replies of the Chambers of Commerce and other Commercial Bodies, together with the Instructions that were subsequently sent to Her Majesty's Representatives abroad, were printed and presented to Parliament in June, 1886, under the title of No. 16, Commercial, 1886, Parts 1 and 2. No fresh Instructions have been issued.

LAW AND JUSTICE—COURT HOUSES—ACCOMMODATION FOR PRISONERS AWAITING TRIAL.

MR. CHANNING (Northampton, E.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether he can inform the House when he expects to lay upon the Table the Memorandum as to the steps taken, or to be taken, by Local Authorities to remedy the existing defects in the accommodation of prisoners awaiting trial?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): Active correspondence is still proceeding between the Home Office, the Prison Commissioners, and about 150 Local Authorities, some of whom only assemble quarterly. I am afraid it will not be sufficiently advanced to enable me to lay a Memorandum on the Table of the House this Session; but the hon. Member may rest assured that there will be no unnecessary delay in proceeding with this matter, and I am able to state that in most cases the Local Authorities are prepared to comply with the wishes of the Home Office.

ROYAL PARKS AND PLEASURE GARDENS—THE "KEW BULLETIN."

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) asked the First Commissioner of Works, Whether he will take steps to have the "Kew Bulletin" on sale at the gates of Kew Gardens in the same way as catalogues?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER (Mr. PLUNKET) (Dublin University), in reply, said, he had given directions that the bulletin should be on sale at Kew Gardens in the same way as catalogues.

ADMIRALTY — H.M.SS. "SULTAN" AND "INFLEXIBLE" — SERVICE AMMUNITION.

CAPTAIN COTTON (Cheshire, Wirral) asked the Surveyor General of Ordnance, When the Returns promised on the 27th June last, relative to the supply of ammunition remaining on board Her Majesty's Ships *Sultan* and *Inflexible* after the bombardment of Alexandria, will be laid upon the Table?

THE SURVEYOR GENERAL (Mr. NORTHCOTE) (Exeter), in reply, said, the Returns would be laid on the Table tomorrow.

INDIA — THE MARRIAGE LAW—INFANT MARRIAGES.

MR. COZENS-HARDY (Norfolk, N.) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether the Government of India have taken any steps with a view to the alteration of the Law as to enforcing cohabitation in the case of infant marriages?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JOHN GORST) (Chatham): No communication has been received from the Government of India on the subject; but the Secretary of State has reason to believe that the Government of India has issued a circular letter calling for the opinions of the local Governments.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—BOYCOTTING AT NEWPORT, CO. MAYO.

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether his attention has been called to a Resolution passed at a meeting of the Newport (Mayo) branch of the National League, held in the chapel yard, on Sunday, the 24th July, to Boycott the Protestant shopkeepers of Newport, because they did not join in a general illumination on the occasion of the nuns being installed in their new convent; whether, on the same Sunday evening, a mob assembled in the street, hooting, throwing stones, and smashing windows; and, whether this Boycotting of Protestants, as such, continues?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): My attention has not been called to the particular Resolution mentioned; but there is, unfortunately, no doubt that Protestant shopkeepers at Newport are Boycotted. It is true that on the 24th of July a noisy mob assembled in the town and broke some windows in the house of a Mr. Newcombe; but I do not know that this circumstance had any connection with the Boycotting of Protestants.

PIERS AND HARBOURS (IRELAND)—ROCK AT ENTRANCE TO ADRIGOLE, CO. CORK.

MR. GILHOOLY (Cork, W.) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether, in view of the fact that the rock at the entrance to the only landing place at Roche, Adrigole, County Cork, endangers the lives of fishermen and others who are compelled to land there, he will take steps to have it removed?

THE SECRETARY (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): Parliament has not placed at the disposal of the Board of Trade any funds for the purposes referred to by the hon. Member; and they are, therefore, not in a position to act in the manner suggested.

DUBLIN METROPOLITAN POLICE — ARREST FOR DRUNKENNESS.

MR. P. M'DONALD (Sligo, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether there is any Report in the Department of the Dublin Metropolitan Police regarding the arrest for drunkenness of a youth opposite the Chatham Street Police Station on the evening of the 2nd instant; whether, in such Report, it is stated that the youth, instead of being brought into Chatham Street Police Station, was dragged bleeding all the way through Grafton to College Street Station, and, owing to his resistance, was savagely batoned, and had his arms twisted; and, whether he will cause an inquiry to be made into the conduct of the police in this case?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.), in reply, said, the Government would not grant the inquiry sought for, as no unnecessary force was used in the arrest of the prisoner, who resisted violently.

HARBOUR ACCOMMODATION (IRELAND) — REPORT OF SIR JAMES ALLPORT'S COMMISSION—SLIGO.

MR. P. M'DONALD (Sligo, N.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether Sir James Allport's Commission have yet reported the result of their inquiry into the harbour accommodation of the Irish ports; and, if so, whether any recommendation has been made in favour of Sligo, considering the strong evidence laid before the Commissioners as to the necessity of better accommodation for those engaged in the fishing industry, and for the general improvement of the harbour; and, whether any portion of the £50,000 will be allocated to Sligo, or a loan granted by the Treasury for the very necessary improvement of Sligo Harbour?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.), in reply, said, the Royal Commission on Irish Public Works had not yet reported on Irish Harbours. He was informed that the Commissioners were carefully considering the case of Sligo, about which they had received some valuable information, besides having made a personal inspection. No part of the grant alluded to in the Question would be allocated for harbour improvements.

WAR OFFICE—MILITARY BANDS AT THE MANCHESTER EXHIBITION.

CAPTAIN COTTON (Cheshire, Wirral) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether it is the case that permission has been given to some military bands to play at the Manchester Exhibition, while similar permission has been refused to the band of the Royal Artillery; and, if so, why?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): Permission was given early in the year for the band of the Royal Engineers to play at the Manchester Exhibition, and later the band of the Gloucestershire Regiment, which is stationed in the Northern District, has played there. For military reasons it has recently been found necessary by the Military Authorities to prohibit bands from playing out of their own districts without special sanction from headquarters.

CAPTAIN COTTON: Was permission given to the band of the 2nd Life Guards?

MR. E. STANHOPE: I have no information on the subject; but I will inquire.

ADMIRALTY—NAVAL MANŒUVRES—SMOKELESS COAL.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether he is aware that, in the naval exercises, the whereabouts of the hostile Fleet was ascertained by Commodore Fitzroy in consequence of the dense smoke emitted; what coal is used by the Admiralty for the men-of-war; what reason exists for not using best smokeless Cardiff coal; and, whether that coal is not equally efficient for steam purposes?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. FORWOOD) (Lancashire, Ormskirk) (who replied) said: The best South Wales steam coal is alone supplied at all Home ports and at the principal foreign Naval Stations to the Fleet. Especial care is exercised in selecting only good collieries from which to obtain supplies; and in revising the list this year we were afforded valuable information from the experience of the largest English Mail Steamship Companies. No Report has yet been received that enables us to account for the smoke reported to have been emitted from some vessels taking part in the manœuvres; but it is quite probable it arose from inperfect combustion caused by a vessel lying under a low head of steam suddenly endeavouring to force the fires and charging the furnaces too rapidly with fresh coal.

WAR OFFICE—STAFF PAYMASTERS—LIEUTENANT COLONELS.

COLONEL DUNCAN (Finsbury, Holborn) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether he has yet decided that the rank of Lieutenant Colonel shall be given to Staff Paymasters after five years' service as Major?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): In accordance with the promise made to my hon. and gallant Friend during the discussion of the Estimates, I have carefully considered this point; and it is now proposed to make Staff Paymasters eligible for the rank of Lieutenant Colonel after seven years' service in the rank, and in consideration of the responsible duties which it is proposed to assign to Chief Paymasters to confer on them the rank of Colonel.

CUSTOMS DUTIES—"ENTRY TAX"—CORK CUSTOM HOUSE.

MR. HOOPER (Cork, S.E.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether he is aware that merchants and traders at Cork, when paying duty through the Custom House there, have to pay for each entry passed a tax of 1*s*., which is called "Entry Tax;" whether this tax was originally levied in several ports, but was subsequently abrogated as regards all these ports except Cork; whethere is any reason why an exceptional impost should be continued in the single case of Cork, to the disadvantage of local traders; and, whether he can take any measures for their relief in this matter?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): I find, on inquiry, that merchants and traders at Cork have to pay 1*s*. on passing each entry at the Custom House. The duty, however, does not go into the Exchequer, but to the Cork Harbour Commissioners and the Trustees of the Cork Commercial Buildings. It is levied under a local Act of 1814. The Board of Customs are not aware whether any similar duty was originally levied at other ports. In these circumstances, the hon. Member will see that it is for the Local Authorities, and not the Government, to take steps, if thought desirable, for the modification, or abolition, of the duty. I have no means of knowing how far the Local Authorities may have contracted loans on its security.

LAW AND JUSTICE (SCOTLAND)—THE SHERIFF COURT AT DORNOCH—CASE OF HUGH MATHESON, COTTAR,

MR. A. SUTHERLAND (Sutherland) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether it is the fact that Hugh Matheson, cottar, Clashmore, Assynt, in the County of Sutherland, who was alleged to have been concerned in the deforcement of a Sheriff officer while serving writs for arrears of rent on 22nd April last, walked to Dornoch, a distance of 70 miles, to be tried at the Sheriff Court there, and at once reported himself to the authorities, expecting to be tried at the next diet of the Court; whether it is the fact that he was not so tried, though the only witness for the prosecution was easily available; whether, in consequence, Matheson had to walk back again the 70 miles; who is responsible for this unnecessary trouble and hardship to the accused; and, whether, seeing that the authorities did not bring Matheson to trial after he had come 70 miles to surrender himself, it is intended to depart from the charge against him?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): Hugh Matheson, along with several others, was cited on the Sheriff of the county's warrant to answer to a charge of having been active in a mob that deforced an officer of the law, and burned a large number of writs which he had brought with him for service. The citation ordered the accused to appear on May 31. Hugh Matheson, who, I am informed, was specially active in the deforcement, did not appear to answer the citation against him. Had he done so, his case would have been at once disposed of. Another of the accused persons appeared, and was duly tried on that day. A new citation was issued to those who had failed to obey the previous citation; but they again failed to obey, they being thus in contumacy. Instructions were given that if any of them were brought before the Sheriff they should be examined, and the case reported to the Crown Office, that I might judge whether to order their trial by jury or not. Hugh Matheson delivered himself up on August 2, and was, accordingly, examined and committed for trial, but liberated on bail. Any trouble or hardship to which he has been subjected are the result of his disobeying the Sheriff's repeated citations. It is not intended to depart from the charge against him; and he and the others who refused to answer to the citation of Her Majesty's Court will be brought to justice. There is still one man who has not surrendered, and he will also be brought up for examination; and when the proceedings in these examinations are reported to me, I shall consider whether these men, who have so long refused to submit themselves to the law, can be tried summarily, or whether it will be necessary to have them tried by a jury. I must decline to say what the action of the Government is, to prevent this continued defiance of legal process, as to do so might defeat the ends of justice.

EVICTIONS (IRELAND)—THE EVICTIONS AT BODYKE—EXPENSE.

Mr. COX (Clare, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, What was the total cost of the military expedition engaged in carrying out the recent evictions at Bodyke?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.), in reply, said, that the total cost to the public of the military employed at Bodyke was reported by the military authorities to be £190.

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): May I ask, has the right hon. Gentleman seen by the papers that one of the evicted tenants has gone mad?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order!

INLAND REVENUE—REMOVAL EXPENSES OF OFFICERS.

Mr. COX (Clare, E.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether it is a fact that some officers of the Inland Revenue, removed on complaint from one station to another, are allowed their expenses of removal out of the public funds; and, whether other officers of similar rank, and removed under similar circumstances, are refused any expenses; and, if so, why the Commissioners of Inland Revenue make such a difference in the treatment of their officers?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen) (St. George's, Hanover Square): As a general rule, officers of Inland Revenue, when removed from one station to another on complaint, are not allowed their expenses of removal out of public funds. Each case, however, is dealt with on its own merits; and an exception to the rule is occasionally made in cases where it is considered advisable and in the public interest that an officer should be removed, although not actually guilty of any act calling for censure.

INDIA—THE MILITARY FUNDS OF MADRAS, BENGAL, AND BOMBAY.

General Sir GEORGE BALFOUR (Kincardine) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, If he could obtain, for the information of Parliament and the subscribers, a statement of the present position of the Military Funds of Madras, Bengal, and Bombay, with the result of the operation of these Funds since they were taken over by the Secretary of State, commencing with the assets and liabilities (annuitants, subscribers, &c.) of these several Funds as they were left by the respective managements, and showing the changes therein, as well as the effects of the beneficial arrangements granted by the Secretary of State, with the balance of assets and liabilities, &c. now remaining, and, if possible, an approximate statement of the results when liabilities are calculated to cease?

The UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir John Gorst) (Chatham), in reply, said, he found, upon inquiry, that since the assets and liabilities of these Funds were taken over by the Secretary of State they had been treated no longer as in existence as separate Funds, but merged in the general Revenues of India. He was told it would now be impossible to give a statement of what would be the position of these hypothetical Funds, if they had continued to exist, without collecting at great cost a mass of information, some of which would have to be obtained, if at all, in India. When the assets were taken over the actual value of each subscriber was ascertained, and full settlement was at the time made.

ARMS (IRELAND) ACT, 1881—AMBROSE M'SWINEY, FALCARAGH, CO. DONEGAL.

Mr. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether, after the passing of the Arms Act in Ireland in 1881, a gun was taken from a man called M'Swiney, of Carrickshannon House, Falcaragh, County Donegal; whether the gun was duly registered under the provisions of the Arms Act; if he can state where the gun is now; and, if the owner, who has now left Ireland, can have it on application?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.), in reply, said, the answer to the first part of the Question was "Yes." Ambrose M'Swiney was brought before a magistrate for carrying a gun in a proclaimed district without a licence, and the gun was forfeited. His father had a licence for a gun on his farm. The gun, being forfeited, could not now be returned.

Mr. COX (Clare, E.): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that Ambrose M'Swiney referred to is only a child nine years old?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I am not aware.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—PETTY SESSIONS—BALLAGHADERRIN, CO. MAYO—CHARGE OF ASSAULT.

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.): asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether, at Ballaghaderrin, County Mayo, at the Petty Sessions on Monday the 25th July, a prosecution was brought by Patrick Shryane against Thomas Casey and John Brennan for assault; whether the former is a process server who served several ejectments for Lord Dillon, and the latter an *employé* of Lord Dillon's under agent; whether the only magistrate present was Lord Dillon's agent, Mr. Hussey; whether, in the course of complainant's evidence, Mr. Hussey asked his solicitor if he intended to call any witnesses, and, on being answered in the affirmative, immediately remarked that he should consider their evidence worthless, and without any application ordered all Shryane's witnesses out of Court; whether the assault complained was of a very serious character; whether Shryane's statement was corroborated by two respectable persons, who were witnesses of what took place; whether a doctor's certificate was produced in Court, to the effect that the wounds inflicted upon Shryane were of a very serious character; whether Brennan called no witnesses in his defence, and, notwithstanding this, Mr. Hussey dismissed the case; and, whether, if the above facts be true, he will direct the attention of the Lord Chancellor to the conduct of Mr. Hussey in trying cases in which he is personally interested?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.), in reply, said, the Irish Government saw no reason why the attention of the Lord Chancellor should be called to the action of Mr. Hussey in the case; and, as the hon. Gentleman was aware, if any person felt aggrieved he could communicate with the Lord Chancellor on the subject.

JUBILEE THANKSGIVING SERVICE (WESTMINSTER ABBEY)—CHURCHYARD OF ST. MARGARET'S, WESTMINSTER.

Sir EDWARD WATKIN (Hythe) asked the First Commissioner of Works, If his attention has been called to the present condition of the churchyard of St. Margaret's, Westminster, caused by the structures made for Her Majesty's Jubilee; and, when steps will be taken to restore the churchyard to its previous state?

The FIRST COMMISSIONER (Mr. Plunket) (Dublin University), in reply, said, his Department had no control over the churchyard of St. Margaret's, which was enclosed on Jubilee Day by order of the Churchwardens. He was glad, however, to see that steps had been taken for restoring the turf to its original condition.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION — SUB-COMMISSIONERS AT WICKLOW.

Mr. BYRNE (Wicklow, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, The cause of the delay of the Sub-Commissioners of the Land Court holding a sitting in the County Wicklow; and, whether they are likely to hold one soon, as any further delay will cause great hardship to a large number of tenants who have been kept so long waiting to have fair rents fixed?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.), in reply, said, that no unusual or unavoidable delay had occurred in the hearing of land cases in Wicklow. The Sub-Commissioners sat in Wicklow in the September of every year since 1884, and would sit there again next September.

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES (ANIMALS) ACTS — PLEURO - PNEUMONIA IN DUBLIN.

Sir JOHN SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, What steps Her Majesty's Government have taken with a view of stamping out pleuro-pneumonia and other diseases in cattle in the City of Dublin and the surrounding parishes?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): All cattle in the Dublin District are specially branded for purposes of identification. They may not be exposed in the Dublin market except for slaughter, nor exported to Great Britain, nor to the surrounding districts.

POST OFFICE (SCOTLAND) — POST OFFICES AND GROCERS' SHOPS, GLASGOW.

Mr. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.W.) asked the Postmaster General, If he is aware that in Glasgow there are at least 20 post offices in licensed grocers' shops; if the custom is general in Scotland; and, if the granting of postal appointments to holders of licences is in accordance with the usual practice of the office?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University): There are not more than six post offices in licensed grocers' shops in the town and district of Glasgow together. The holding of such licences is not regarded as a disqualification, provided that liquor cannot be drunk on the premises.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—THE RATING OF MACHINERY BILL.

Mr. TOMLINSON (Preston) asked the President of the Local Government Board, Whether he is aware that the Rating of Machinery Bill excites much interest in the manufacturing districts of Lancashire; whether the Government can give any facilities for dealing with it this Session; and, whether they intend, in a subsequent Session, to take up the subject themselves?

The PRESIDENT (Mr. Ritchie) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I am aware that the Bill excites much interest in Lancashire; but I think my hon. Friend will also admit that it excites much opposition. To say the least of it, there is a great difference of opinion on the subject. Under these circumstances, if the Government had time to spare there would be very little chance of the Bill passing this Session, and the Government have no time to give for such a purpose. With reference to what will be done in a subsequent Session, I am sure my hon. Friend will understand it is not in my power to make any statement.

MINES REGULATION ACTS—DISMISSAL OF WILLIAM SHAW, TAWD VALE COLLIERY, SKELMERSDALE.

Mr. TOMLINSON (Preston) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with respect to the case of one William Shaw, who was alleged to have been dismissed without cause from his employment as fireman at the Park Mine, Tawd Vale Colliery, Skelmersdale, Lancashire, to the effect that he had directed the Inspector to make further inquiries into the case, Whether the Home Office have now received any further Report on the case; and, whether he can communicate to the House the substance of such Report?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I have received a further Report from the Inspector; but it does not add much to my knowledge of the real circumstances of the case. Shaw denies that the erasure of the Report was made with his authority. On the other hand, another fireman declares that he erased the Report at the request of Shaw, three times repeated, Shaw saying that he had made a mistake as to the position of the gas. The Inspector is of opinion that the matter cannot be carried any further, and that no violation of the General or Special Rules has been committed. The examination of the mine reported by Shaw was made on a Sunday, and not before the commencement of any shift, and, therefore, was not required to be made by law. I shall be happy to show the Report to my hon. Friend if he wishes it.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—OFFENDERS AGAINST THE FISHERY LAWS—CLONMEL PETTY SESSIONS.

MR. HOOPER (Cork, S.E.) (for Mr. MAURICE HEALY) (Cork) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether, at Clonmel, County Tipperary, Rural Petty Sessions, on the 18th day of February, 1887, after hearing a summons at the suit of John H. Jones, Secretary to the Conservators of Fisheries, Waterford District, against John Connolly, William Nagle, Edmond Hackett, and Michael Manning, charged with an offence against the Fishery Laws, the magistrates dismissed the said complaint against all the said defendants, and, by separate orders, ordered that the said complainant should pay to each of the said defendants the sum of £1 for costs; whether, on the magistrates accordingly issuing their warrants to the Constabulary for the levying of the said costs, the Constabulary refused to execute the warrants, although the said complainant is a man of substantial means; whether, in similar cases at the same Petty Sessions, the said complainant, when successful in prosecuting persons for breaches of the Fishery Laws, has been almost invariably awarded costs against said defendants; and whether, in such cases, the warrants have been levied by fine or imprisonment; and, why the police in the present case have refused, or neglected, to levy the amount of the warrant against Mr. Jones?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.), in reply, said, the facts were substantially as stated in the Question. The warrants were originally issued for the County of Tipperary; but Mr. Jones neither residing nor having any goods in that county, the warrants were submitted to the Inspector General of Constabulary for endorsement in the County of Waterford. The Inspector General felt himself unable to comply with the request, as, in his opinion, the magistrates had clearly exceeded their powers in awarding more than 20*s.* costs, seeing that the defendants had been jointly charged, and that costs were, therefore, incurred on only one summons. The magistrates did not re-issue the warrants, having a doubt as to their legality.

ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY—CASE OF EX-SERGEANT MICHAEL CRONIN.

MR. HOOPER (Cork, S.E.) (for Mr. MAURICE HEALY) (Cork) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether his attention has been called to the case of ex-Sergeant Michael Cronin, late of the Royal Irish Constabulary; whether Cronin served nearly 28 years in the Force, and was sergeant for 11 years, his record during the whole period being unimpeachable; whether, in July, 1886, he was called on by the Inspector General to retire from the Service, owing to an injury to his wrist sustained while on duty in February, 1886; whether he was recommended to the Treasury for a pension of £60 a-year, a Medical Board of three doctors having certified that the injury to his wrist should be considered in his retiring allowance; whether, acting on the opinion of one doctor who was attending Sergeant Cronin, the Treasury came to the conclusion that his retirement was owing to his general state of health, and not specially to the accident to his wrist, and only granted a pension of £54 12*s.*, an amount to which he had become entitled by service nearly three years ago; whether his pension would have been £72 a-year after another two years' service; and whether there is any doubt that he could have served a much longer period than this but for the accident;

whether Sergeant Cronin has since obtained medical certificates from four doctors, showing that, apart from the accident, his health was good and likely to continue so, and has offered to submit himself for examination to any doctor who may be selected; whether, in any case under the Constabulary Acts, his service might, for the purposes of pension, have been computed at 30 years, he having been compulsorily retired; and, whether, having regard to Sergeant Cronin's excellent record, and the fact that he has eight young children dependent upon him, his case will be reconsidered, with a view to having his pension increased to the amount recommended by the Pensions Board?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.), in reply, said, that the retirement of Sergeant Cronin became necessary owing to his having been reported unfit for public service, because he was suffering from chronic bronchitis in addition to an injury to his right wrist. The pension awarded him was in accordance with the Rules of the Service. The Medical Board had reported that if Cronin were again placed on active service the bronchitis would again appear.

ADMIRALTY — THE RECENT NAVAL MANŒUVRES.

Mr. WARMINGTON (Monmouth, W.) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether it is the intention of the Government to lay upon the Table of the House any official or other Report of the recent Naval Manœuvres; and, whether any Return of the casualties to men and ships will be furnished, together with a statement of the opinion of the Board as to the cause or causes of any such casualties?

The FIRST LORD (Lord George Hamilton) (Middlesex, Ealing): An official Report is being prepared for publication, and will be laid on the Table of the House. In this Report will be included a Return of casualties to men and ships, both of which are few, considering the number of men and ships employed.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND) – THE IRISH NATIONAL FORESTERS AT PORTRUSH—FIRING FROM A TRAIN.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether it is a fact that six persons have suffered from the firing from the train by the Irish National Foresters, on Sunday last, along the line between Portrush and Ballymena; whether Archibald Beattie was shot in the thigh by a bullet, and James Campbell wounded in the hand; whether Mr. James Dowds, licentiate of the Ballymena Presbytery, has made the following statement:—

> "The train came dashing along, and, when opposite us, I saw a hand stretched out of a first class carriage window, and immediately there was a loud report of a firearm, simultaneously with the report I felt wounded, and would have fallen to the ground had I not leaned up against the railings. . . . The bullet has not been extracted, and I have suffered great pain during the night. . . . We had a full view of the crowd from the moment the train approached. . . . There was not a single stone or missile thrown from it at the passing train;"

and, whether a revolver was thrown from the train, and is in the possession of the Constabulary?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): Four persons are known to have been wounded. The Government have no information as to a revolver having been thrown from the train. The other circumstances, I understand, are as mentioned in the Question.

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman, whether the circumstances referred to in this Question were subject to the provocation given to the National Foresters at Portrush, which provocation took the form of an attack made by a mob of men who came from Coleraine to Portrush for the purpose of making that attack on the excursionist party; whether this is the substance of the official Report given to the Government; and I would also ask, whether the excursionists gave notice to the police of the time of the excursion with a view to the preservation of the peace, and that no shots were fired from the train until large stones were thrown at the train, and people in the train were wounded?

Mr. JOHNSTON: Before the right hon. Gentleman answers that Question, may I ask if he has received a communication from Mr. Robinson, the magistrate in charge at Portrush, stating that no interference took place with the excursionists on their arrival, and that it was only upon their return from Portrush, when shots were fired, that any attack was made; also, that no Orangemen were implicated in the disturbance, which was wholly caused by the conduct of the excursionists?

Mr. SEXTON: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman, whether the attack on the excursion party, although it did not take place on their arrival at Portrush, did take place on their return to Portrush, where the assailants had assembled in the meantime?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: It is quite true that shots appear to have been fired from the train on the return of the party. It is not true that there was any provocation which would justify such conduct. The firing from the train preceded the throwing of stones at the train; and altogether the conduct of the Foresters appears to have been a most reckless proceeding.

Mr. JOHNSTON asked, whether the right hon. Gentleman had seen a statement to the effect that as the train approached a bridge a large number of women and children were waiting to see the excursionists pass; that a large number of whisky bottles and porter bottles were thrown from the train; that this enraged the people, and that stones were thrown; and that on the passing of the second train about 140 shots were fired from the train?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said, he had explained that the shots were fired from the train before the stones were thrown at the train.

Mr. SEXTON asked, whether the right hon. Gentleman was aware that three shots were fired by the mob at the Foresters before they returned the fire at all?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: As far as I know no shots were fired at any Foresters in any train.

Mr. SEXTON: There were.

PRISONS (ENGLAND AND WALES)—"HARD LABOUR" AT HORFIELD GAOL.

Colonel LAURIE (Bath) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, If he has received a Memorial from the Justices of Bath on the subject of the alleged want of appliances for "hard labour" at Horfield Gaol; and, whether any steps have been taken to

enable the sentence of "hard labour" to be duly carried out?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): Yes, Sir. I have received such a Memorial; and I am informed by the Chairman of the Prison Commissioners that he has instructed an Inspector of Prisons to report to him on the matter. It is not, however, a fact that there are no "cranks" in the prison, for I am informed that there are 19.

LAW AND JUSTICE (ENGLAND AND WALES)—EPPING PETTY SESSIONS—ASSAULTS BY GIPSIES.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been called to the case of assault by gipsies in Epping Forest on 11th July, for which assault several men were, on 29th July, sentenced by the Bench at the Epping Petty Sessions to various terms of imprisonment; whether he is aware that parts of Epping Forest are infested by gipsies, and that the above is not an isolated case of assault by them; and, what steps he proposes to take to render the Forest safe to visitors?

Mr. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) inquired, whether the right hon. Gentleman was aware that the principal sufferers by these attacks were excursionists and Sunday school children; and that in the case mentioned a small school had incurred an expense of £30 in conducting the prosecution; and, further, as the prosecution was obviously undertaken in the public interest, he would consider the propriety of re-imbursing the necessary costs to the school?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): I have received a Report from the Commissioner of Police, who informs me that the scene of the assault in question lies a considerable distance beyond the boundary of the Metropolitan Police District. I have accordingly written to the Chief Constable of Essex, calling his attention to the alleged state of the Forest, and asking him to favour me with a Report on the matter. I have no information as to any assaults other than the one referred to in the Question, on which occasion I understand that 12 out of the 15 gipsies who were summoned for the assault were convicted by the Epping Bench. I propose to communicate with the Conservators of Epping Forest, as well as with the County Constabulary, with a view of securing a more effectual protection of visitors. I shall be very happy to give consideration to the question of the prosecutors' costs.

SCOTLAND—THE FORTH BRIDGE.

Mr. MUNRO-FERGUSON (Leith, &c.) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether the frequently recurring accidents at the Forth Bridge have been duly investigated and reported upon by the Procurators Fiscal of the county to the Law Officers of the Crown; and, if so, whether blame attaches to anyone in connection therewith; and, if any criminal or other proceeding are to be taken?

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): All the accidents which have taken place at the Forth Bridge have been investigated at once, either by the Procurator Fiscal of Linlithgowshire or the Procurator Fiscal of Fifeshire, according to the place of the accident. No case has occurred in which there has been any ground for instituting criminal proceedings.

SOUTHERN PACIFIC—THE HAWAIIAN MINISTRY—REPUDIATION OF DEBT.

Mr. CHANNING (Northampton, E.) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether his attention has been called to the report in *The Times* of Tuesday, 9th August, that the new Hawaiian Ministry refuse to recognize as valid the loan of £2,000,000 recently contracted by Mr. Gibson's Ministry, and that Her Majesty's Consul at Honolulu has, in consequence, threatened that he will ask for a naval force to compel the new Ministry to assume the debts of their predecessors; whether this report is substantially correct; and, whether Her Majesty's Government contemplate any action of the kind indicated in this report?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Sir James Fergusson) (Manchester, N.E.): Her Majesty's Government have no knowledge of such events. I observe that the Hawaiian Consul General, in a letter to *The Times* yesterday, has contradicted the report which had appeared in that newspaper.

TREATY OF BERLIN—ARTICLE LXII.—ARMENIA — ABDUCTION OF A CHRISTIAN GIRL.

Mr. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether Her Majesty's Government have received any information confirming the accounts which appeared in the public Press on Thursday 4th August, of a conflict between the Mussulman and the Armenian population of Amasin, arising out of the abduction of a Christian girl by Hassan Bey, the Turkish Governor, and of the danger of further attacks on the Christian population of the city; and, whether, if the facts turn out to be as stated, Her Majesty's Government will, in pursuance of the provisions of Article lxii. of the Treaty of Berlin, address representations to the Ottoman Government on the matter, with a view to the dismissal of Hassan Bey, and the prevention of outrages and conflicts, tending to imperil the peace of the East?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Sir James Fergusson) (Manchester, N.E.): Her Majesty's Government have as yet no information in regard to the case referred to in my hon. Friend's Question.

Mr. BRYCE: Will Her Majesty's Government inquire into the matter?

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON: I cannot think that it is the duty of the Government to make inquiry into a newspaper telegram from Constantinople, in which mention is made of a rumour. The circumstances described in the hon. Member's Question are stated in the paragraph in the newspapers to be according to one version of the report. I think if Her Majesty's Government, in consequence of such a paragraph in a newspaper, were to address a remonstrance to the Government of Turkey, and possibly ask the dismissal of an officer, it would be a very strong measure indeed.

Mr. BRYCE: The right hon. Gentleman has entirely misunderstood my Question. Will he inquire into the facts from the Ambassador—whether there is any foundation for the rumour? I do not ask him to remonstrate until he has ascertained the facts.

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON: We had better wait at least for the course of post.

THE QUEEN'S JUBILEE—THE NAVAL MANŒUVRES.

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether his attention has been drawn to the statements in *The Pall Mall Gazette* of the 8th instant, that some of the vessels taking part in the recent Naval Manœuvres were undermanned; whether it is the fact that one of the gunboats of the D Flotilla, named the *Mastiff*, left Portsmouth Harbour for the manœuvres two stokers, one leading stoker, and one engine room artificer short; and, whether the whole of the engine room staff had, in consequence, to keep watch and watch during the progress of the manœuvres?

The FIRST LORD (Lord George Hamilton) (Middlesex, Ealing): I have not seen the statement referred to; but arrangements were made that all the ships should be fully manned according to their complements. For some reason, as to the cause of which I have not yet received the Report, the *Mastiff* appears to have left Portsmouth three men short of her engine room staff, which necessitated watch and watch being kept during six days, of which period, however, the vessel was only under way for 60 hours, the remaining time being with banked fires. The complement was complete during the actual progress of the manœuvres, and the necessity for watch and watch ceased.

ADMIRALTY (SHIPBUILDING)—H.M.S. "AUSTRALIA."

Mr. ADDISON (Ashton-under-Lyne) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, By what firm of contractors H.M.S. *Australia* was built, and what was the contract price; whether this is the ship to which reference has been made by the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington, as showing the superiority of contract to Dockyard work; whether the ship has been sent to Chatham for completion, and what was the estimated cost of such completion; whether, on the examination of the ship for the purpose of the intended alteration, the Admiralty received a Report from their officers at Chatham as to the construction of the ship; what was the nature of such Report; whether an official recommendation has been made to the Admiralty to return the *Australia* to the contractors; and, what steps the Admiralty have taken, and intend to take, in reference to the *Australia*, in consequence of the Reports they have received?

The FIRST LORD (Lord George Hamilton) (Middlesex, Ealing): The *Australia* was built by Messrs. Napier and Sons, of Glasgow, and the contract price for hull was £154,960, and for engines £63,375. I understand that this is the ship referred to by the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill). She has been sent to Chatham for completion; but the estimated cost for carrying out the work has not yet been received. The Report of Survey, which was received yesterday, states that the ship has been well and carefully built; but that a few of the minor fittings and internal arrangements require alteration. No recommendation has been made to the Admiralty to return the *Australia* to the contractors. The recommendations contained in the Report are now under consideration.

ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY—COURT OF INQUIRY — GLASSLOUGH, CO. MONAGHAN—CONSTABLE KENNEDY.

Mr. MACARTNEY (Antrim, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether a Constabulary Court of Inquiry was held at Glasslough, County Monaghan, on the 12th May, 1886, to investigate a charge made against Constable Kennedy by two brothers named M'Gonnell, for making use of party expressions; whether six witnesses of good character were called for the defence, and only three for the prosecution; and, why, in the face of the preponderance of evidence being in favour of the accused, the Court found him guilty of the charge preferred against him?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.), in reply, said, the facts were substantially as stated in the first paragraph of the Question. The Court of Inquiry, after carefully weighing the evidence, considered the case proved; and the Inspector General found it necessary, in the interest of the Public Service, to order the constable's removal to another county.

POOR LAW (IRELAND)—BOARD OF GUARDIANS—ENNISTYMON UNION.

Mr. JORDAN (Clare, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If the Local Government Board have yet arrived at any decision in relation to the dispute between them and the Board of Guardians of the Ennistymon Union, County Clare, arising out of their appointment to the Protestant Episcopal chaplaincy to the workhouse?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.), in reply, said, the Local Government Board fixed the salary of the Protestant chaplain to the workhouse at £5 a-year, and the proposal of the Guardians was that he should be paid by fee; but the Local Government Board found that they could not legally sanction such an arrangement.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—THE CURTIN FAMILY.

Mr. KIMBER (Wandsworth) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether it is true, as stated in *The Times* of Monday, 8th instant, that insults and annoyances to the Curtin family still continue in Kerry; that an outrage of a most daring character was committed only a few nights since; that a respectable farmer named Spring having bought a cow from Mrs. Curtin, the cow was driven off by a number of men in front of Spring's house and stabbed in several places and thrown into a ditch; also, that a cart, recently lent by Mrs. Curtin to Spring to draw turf, was smashed to pieces the same night by a number of men assembled for that purpose; and, whether there is any provision of the Crimes Act which will reach the case?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): I am informed that the Curtin family are not now insulted and annoyed, the number of prosecutions instituted against persons so acting have had a good effect. It is true that Spring has suffered in the manner stated. The police, however, have reason to believe that the acts referred to have no connection with the Boycotting of the Curtin family; but are due to private malice towards himself. There is, at present, no evidence in these cases against any person.

Mr. EDWARD HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.) asked the right hon. Gentleman, whether it was not the opinion of the Curtin family themselves that the continual reference to the case in the House for election purposes——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order!

ARMY (AUXILIARY FORCES)—OFFICERS OF YEOMANRY AND CAVALRY.

Mr. GENT-DAVIS (Lambeth, Kennington) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether an officer of the Yeomanry can be transferred to a Cavalry Regiment on passing the requisite examination entitling him to a commission for service therein?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. E. Stanhope) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): No, Sir. An officer of Yeomanry is not eligible, as such, for transfer to the Cavalry of the Line by merely passing an examination.

LAW AND POLICE—THE CASE OF MISS CASS—MR. NEWTON, METROPOLITAN POLICE MAGISTRATE.

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether he will communicate to the House the Lord Chancellor's decision respecting Mr. Newton before the Vote for the Metropolitan Police Magistrates is taken, in order to enable the House to form its own judgment upon the matter?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): I will communicate the Lord Chancellor's decision to the House as soon as the Lord Chancellor thinks it possible to do so without prejudice to pending criminal proceedings. There is no Vote for the Metropolitan Police Magistrates, whose salaries are by law charged on the Consolidated Fund.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—PARLIAMENTARY FRANCHISE (EXTENSION TO WOMEN) BILL.

Mr. RADCLIFFE COOKE (Newington, W.) asked the hon. Member for Hanley, Whether it his intention to proceed to the Parliamentary Franchise (Extension to Women) Bill this Session?

Mr. WOODALL (Hanley), in reply, said, that he had naturally desired to take the sense of the new Parliament upon the question, and had been relying upon the promise, guarded and qualified as it was, of the First Lord of the Treasury to give him an opportunity. He now understood from the right hon. Gentleman that there was little chance of his being able to satisfy that expectation; and, under the circumstances, he thought he should be best consulting the convenience of the House by moving to-morrow that the Order for the second reading be discharged.

NORTH SEA FISHERIES CONVENTION—SEIZURE OF THE SMACK "LADY GODIVA."

SIR EDWARD BIRKBECK (Norfolk, E.) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether a foreign cruiser is entitled by German law, not only to board a fishing vessel not engaged in fishing, and belonging to a fleet of smacks, whether within or outside territorial waters, but also to fire ball cartridge at and run into her, when no offence has been committed; and, whether the German Government have offered any explanation as to the grounds on which the officer in command of the German cruiser took the Grimsby smack, *Lady Godiva*, into Wilhelmshaven, the captain of the smack in question having been acquitted?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.), (who replied) said: Fishing boats within territorial waters and in the North Sea, under the Convention of 1882, must heave to at the order of the commander of a cruiser, and if they disobey the commander may compel them to do so. This provision is plainly implied in Articles 26, 28, and 29. But the suspicion against the *Lady Godiva* was of fishing in the territorial German waters, on which ground the cruiser was in her right in requiring the smack to heave to. The master of the *Lady Godiva* was acquitted of the charge of illegal fishing; and the charge of resistance to the German cruiser was apparently not pressed. The full report of the trial has not yet been received; when it reaches Her Majesty's Government they will carefully consider the facts of the case, and such action as may be proper will then be taken.

SUPPLY—THE NEWFOUNDLAND FISHERY NEGOTIATIONS.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether the sum proposed to be voted on the Supplementary Estimates for allowances and expenses in respect of the Newfoundland Fishery Negotiations includes any claim which the late Government refused to sanction?

SIR HERBERT MAXWELL (A LORD of the TREASURY) (Wigtonshire) (who replied) said: The amount paid to Sir Clare Ford is £545 18*s*. 4*d*., which is the sum sanctioned by the late Government, with the addition of travelling expenses, as to which no question has arisen. The amount paid to Mr. Pennell is £192 9*s*. 6*d*. This is for the expenses of further negotiations conducted by Mr. Pennell during May and June of last year, and the payment is at the rate sanctioned by the late Government.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he was to understand that the decision of the late Government was to be reversed in a Supplementary Estimate?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square) said, he was not personally acquainted with the details, and, perhaps, the right hon. Gentleman would repeat his Question when the Secretary to the Treasury was present.

AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT—THE HESSIAN FLY.

MR. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, When the Government expect to receive the Report of Mr. Whitehead and Mr. Grey with reference to the prevalence of the Hessian fly in various parts of the country; whether it is the fact that Mr. Whtehead submitted a full Report upon this subject to the Agricultural Department so long ago as October of last year; what action has been taken at any time since then by the Government to give effect to the recommendations of that Report; and, when did the Agricultural Department first become aware of the prevalence of that insect in the country during the present season?

MR. H. GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden) also asked, whether the right hon. Gentleman was aware that Questions on the subject had been frequently addressed to the Government since August last; and, whether the answer had been invariably made that the Government was fully alive to the importance of the subject; and, how it was that at the eleventh hour the Government were about to appoint a Commissioner to inquire into it?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. Member is arguing the point.

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): Mr. Whitehead's and Mr. Grey's Report is expected immediately. Mr. Whitehead's first Report was received in October, 1886, and was immediately printed and sent to all County Local Authorities in Great Britain. Copies were laid on the Table of both Houses on the meeting of Parliament. Mr. Whitehead reported last February that the pupæ of the Hessian fly had been discovered by farmers in straw of corn just threshed out near Dundee. A Circular was sent to the Local Authorities in March with a notice as to the discovery of pupa cases, and suggestions to prevent their distribution. A copy of Mr. Whitehead's Report was sent during the present month to all the agricultural papers. Mr. Whitehead is of opinion that all that can be done at present of practicable benefit in the circumstances will be to circulate methods of preventing this attack, and his suggestions are being widely circulated in all the agricultural districts. Copies of all the documents which have been issued on this subject will shortly be laid upon the Table.

Mr. ANDERSON (Elgin and Nairn) asked, whether the Government or the Commisssioners had communicated with the Agricultural Department of the United States for the purpose of obtaining any Reports or other documents in the possession of the United States Government relating to the Hessian fly and the best method of dealing with it; and whether they would cause any such documents, and other information of value, to be published in a cheap and convenient form for circulation; whether the Government would extend their inquiries as to the presence of the Hessian fly in Scotland, especially the counties of Elgin and Nairn; and whether a Commissioner would be appointed to proceed at once and make investigations in these counties?

Mr. MATTHEWS: Yes, Sir. The Reports of all the branches of the Agricultural Department of the United States are received. Some of the Entomologists' Reports refer to the Hessian fly, and it will be considered whether any part of them can be usefully published. As regards the outbreaks in Scotland, Mr. Whitehead originally suggested that Inspectors should be sent to all the infected districts; but subsequently withdrew the suggestion, as unfortunately there is no longer any doubt as to the existence of the Hessian fly in the localities named.

Mr. CHAPLIN asked whether the House was to understand that the Government had taken no further action in the matter since the first Report of Mr. Whitehead, and its circulation?

Mr. MATTHEWS replied that steps had been taken by the Government to forward to every part of the country suggestions as to the best course to be adopted in order to destroy the fly.

Mr. CHAPLIN appealed to the right hon. Gentleman who was responsible, in the absence of the Chancellor of the Duchy, for the Agricultural Department, having regard to the pressing—and he might say immediate—importance of the question, whether, if the Government had no sufficient powers to deal with the matter, he would undertake, either in this or the other House of Parliament, to introduce a short and simple measure, which might be passed in two or three days, giving whatever powers might be necessary to deal with this growing evil, an evil which, if not arrested in time, he believed, might lead to the disaster, and complete the ruin of the corn-growing districts of the country?

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): I would remind my right hon. Friend that the Reports we have received point to this—that no Act of Parliament and no Bill that we could pass would be effectual for the purpose. All that can be done must be done by individuals themselves by the exercise of the greatest possible vigilance. We are circulating this information to the utmost of our ability. We shall get further Reports; and if we could see a way to exterminating this pest we should not lose a single day proposing this measure.

Mr. CHAPLIN asked, whether the right hon. Gentleman meant to say that no actual or effective steps could be taken for stamping out that pest precisely as was done in the case of the cattle plague some years ago?

Mr. W. H. SMITH said, that they were obliged to proceed upon the scientific information which they received. With regard to adopting effective measures in the case, those who were best capable of advising them upon such matters told them positively that it would be impossible for an Act of Parliament to stamp out that disease.

Mr. H. GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden) inquired as to the date of the information to which the right hon. Gentleman referred?

Mr. W. H. SMITH said, it was information they had received within the last three days.

RAILWAYS (ENGLAND AND WALES)—STRIKE OF ENGINE DRIVERS AND FIREMEN ON THE MIDLAND RAILWAY.

Mr. P. O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether it has come to his knowledge that it has been publicly alleged that the Midland Railway Company are filling up the places of their engine drivers now on strike with men, several of whom were discharged from their own service and the service of other Companies for drunkenness, physical incapacity, and neglect of duty, or incompetency for its proper discharge; and, whether, in the interest of the public safety, he will inquire into these allegations, and, if they are true, address a remonstrance to the Company on these matters?

Mr. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): Before the right hon. Gentleman replies, I should like to ask him whether his attention has been called to a statement that, on Sunday last, August 7th, a District Traffic Inspector was in charge of and driving an engine in steam from Nottingham to Peterborough, with a fitter as fireman, and that the Traffic Inspector had never passed an examination as being qualified to take charge of a train in steam; and, whether he will make any representation to the Midland Railway Company as to the danger to the public of such a proceeding?

Mr. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.) asked whether, as a matter of fact, many of the men recently employed by the Midland Railway, but discharged, were now rapidly asking to be taken back on the old terms?

The SECRETARY (Baron Henry De Worms) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): In reference to the Question on the Paper, I can only repeat the answer which I gave the other day, that the Board of Trade have no power to interfere in questions between Railway Companies and their servants; and for the same reason I am unable to make the inquiry suggested by the hon. Member. With regard to the second Question, I can only say that if the hon. Gentleman is good enough to hand me any information bearing out the remarks he has made, I will cause investigation to be made; but for the reason I have given, I have no power to interfere between the Directors and their servants, and the Board of Trade have no power in the matter.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) asked if the hon. Gentleman was able to ascertain the truth of the statement that engines had been burned—that was to say, that their tubes, &c., had been destroyed?

Baron HENRY DE WORMS: I can only say that the Midland Railway Company has not made any communication to me on the subject, and I am not empowered to ask.

THE SUGAR TRADE—REPORT OF PROGRESS.

Mr. KIMBER (Wandsworth) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether he will call for a Further Report on the Progress of the Sugar Trade, in continuation of that made to the Board in July, 1884, and will consent to a Return thereof, and of any further Papers which can be usefully laid before the House?

The SECRETARY (Baron Henry De Worms) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): The Board of Trade have no objection to present a continuation of the Tables of production and trade in sugar given in the Report for 1884, if the hon. Member will move for them; but the Board are unable to furnish information such as that given in the latter part of the Return.

INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT— "RECORDED CAUTION."

Mr. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether he has received a letter from Mr. Herbert Burrows, of the Inland Revenue Department, in which he states that a "recorded caution" has been recognized by the Board for very many years as one of the Departmental forms of official punishment; and, whether he can now give the House any further information on the matter?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen) (St. George's, Hanover Square): I have received a letter from Mr. Herbert Burrows, and have informed him that I cannot engage in a correspondence with him on the subject. "A recorded caution" has, I understand, never been recognized by the Board of Inland Revenue as a punishment. It entails no loss of pay, privileges, or prospects. It is true that three successive "recorded cautions" are equivalent to an "admonition," which is a punishment, inasmuch as it prevents the promotion of an officer within 12 months, and stops his increment of salary over the same period. But a single "recorded caution" entails no loss whatever to the person cautioned. It may have—and is, of course, intended to have—an effect upon his mind. But it does not, of itself, impair his position and prospects.

LAW AND POLICE (METROPOLIS)— CHARGE AGAINST MR. H. INWOOD OF ASSAULT.

Mr. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been called to the following extract from the evidence of Mr. J. S. Hepworth, solicitor, given at the hearing on Tuesday last, at the Marylebone Police Court, of a charge against Mr. Harry Inwood of assaulting Police-constable James M'Cawley:—

> "The prisoner implored someone to go and fetch a policeman, and when one arrived the prisoner asked him to take the prosecutor into custody, and I told him that M'Cawley was the one who should be charged, as I had seen it all;"

and, whether he will cause inquiry to be made into the conduct of this policeman in arresting Mr. Inwood instead of Constable M'Cawley?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.), in reply, said, he understood that the case had been dealt with at the Marylebone Police Court that day, and the Report of the Chief Commissioner of Police would be made to him.

POST OFFICE (SCOTLAND) — MAIL STEAMERS — MAIL SERVICE BETWEEN STROME AND DINGWALL.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness) asked the Postmaster General, Whether it is the case that the mail steamers from Portree and Stornoway generally arrive at Strome about 9.30 a.m.; that the mail train leaves at 11 o'clock, arriving at Dingwall 40 minutes after the north mail has left, and hence the mails are detained at Dingwall for nearly 24 hours; that the mail train from Strome to Dingwall is a very slow train, taking two hours and 30 minutes for a distance of 53 miles; and, whether he will either arrange for the train to start earlier, or to increase the speed of the train?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University): In reply to the hon. Member, I beg to state that the facts are substantially as set forth in his Question, except, perhaps, that the steamer from Stornoway frequently arrives at Strome Ferry before 9.30 a,m. But I am advised that any earlier departure than 11 a.m. of the mail train from Strome Ferry would, probably, give rise to public inconvenience in the working of the Steam Boat Service, and is therefore undesirable. An acceleration of the train from Strome Ferry would, as I have already stated to the House, involve expense which circumstances do not appear to warrant, there being no reason to believe that the Railway Company would effect an earlier arrival of the train at Dingwall, except for an additional payment, which the amount of correspondence to be benefited would not justify.

ROYAL PARKS AND PLEASURE GARDENS—WINDSOR FOREST.

Sir JOHN SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, What steps, if any, Her Majesty's Government intend taking with a view of throwing open Windsor Forest to the public, and abolishing the locked gates which at present encompass a considerable portion of the Forest?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): Windsor Forest is already practically open to foot passengers, and also to the carriages of residents in the neighbourhood, who under certain Regulations are able to obtain keys of the gates. Looking to the fact that there are deer in Windsor Park, it would be impossible, without great expense in the way of gatekeepers and lodges, to abolish the locked gates as proposed, and this extra expense the Government are not prepared to incur.

SIR JOHN SWINBURNE: Will the Government take steps to abolish the deer?

MR. W. H. SMITH: No, Sir.

DUCHY OF CORNWALL—"PERPETUAL PENSIONS."

MR. CALEB WRIGHT (Lancashire, S.W., Leigh) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether the sum of £630 14*s*. 2*d*., named in the Report of the Select Committee on Perpetual Pensions as annual rents paid to the Duchy of Cornwall, is provided for in this year's Consolidated Fund; and, whether he can inform the House who is responsible for disregarding the Treasury Minute of 1839, which directed this payment to cease on the 15th of April, 1841?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I do not find the post groats payment is mentioned in the Report of the Perpetual Pensions Committee. The sum of £630 14*s*. 2*d*. is paid as it falls due out of the Cosolidated Fund, in accordance with 1 & 2 *Vict*. c. 120. The Board of Treasury are responsible for neglecting to observe what I must contend were the illegal directions of their Predecessors.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) asked, whether the right hon. Gentleman was aware that, by Treasury Minute, payment of the sum was expressly directed to cease in April, 1841, and whether Sir Reginald Welby had not stated before the Committee on Perpetual Pensions that the Treasury had no authority to pay the sum since that date.

MR. W. H. SMITH: Yes, Sir; that is accurate. If I may say so, the Minute was passed without legal authority, and the Act of Parliament is absolutely binding. That is a contention as to which I believe there is no doubt whatever.

MR. BRADLAUGH gave Notice that he would call attention to the whole subject early next Session.

TITHE COMMUTATION AND REDEMPTION—A ROYAL COMMISSION.

MR. H. GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether Her Majesty's Government will consider the desirability of appointing a Royal Commission to inquire into the Commutation and Redemption of Tithe, with a view to future legislation on the subject?

MR. STANLEY LEIGHTON (Shropshire, Oswestry) also inquired, what course the Government proposed to take with regard to the Tithe Rent Charge Recovery Bill, which had already passed the House of Lords?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I shall state that on Monday. The proposal of the hon. Member (Mr. H. Gardner) involves very large and serious questions with regard to numerous and widespreading interests, upon which Her Majesty's Government could not come to a definite conclusion without much consideration.

MR. H. GARDNER: I shall repeat the Question on Monday.

MR. W. H. SMITH: I shall not be able to give an answer on Monday.

In reply to Mr. KENYON (Denbigh, &c.),

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.) said, the Report of Mr. Bridge, the Commissioner who inquired into the Welsh tithe disturbances was expected daily.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—CONVEYANCING ACTS AMENDMENT (SCOTLAND) BILL.

MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.W.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, If the Government propose, in view of the unanimous wish of the Scotch Members, to proceed with the Conveyancing Acts Amendment (Scotland) Bill?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I am not yet in a position to say when this Bill will be taken.

POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK AND GOVERNMENT ANNUITIES BILL—CLAUSE 1—POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANKS AND TRUSTEE SAVINGS BANKS.

VISCOUNT GRIMSTON (Herts, St. Albans) (for Mr. DIXON-HARTLAND) (Middlesex, Uxbridge) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether, after the strong representations made to him on the subject, the limit of £50 will be altered to £30 in Clause 1 of the Post Office Savings Banks and Government Annuities Bill?

MR. WHITLEY (Liverpool, Everton) also asked, Whether, in the event of the Post Office Savings Banks Bill passing, the Government will extend to the Trustee Savings Banks the same facilities which they propose to give to the Post Office Savings Banks?

MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.) Before this Question is answered, I wish to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, having regard to the fact that in addition to the old debt incurred and being paid out of Revenue, amounting to £83,672 annually, there is a further loss to the National Exchequer, in connection with Trustee Banks, of over £9,000 yearly, for cost of management and excess of interest allowed by the National Debt Commissioners to such banks, over the amount produced by the sums deposited with them by the Trustees, he considers it safe to "extend to the Trustee Savings Banks the same facilities which they propose to give to Post Office Savings Banks," seeing that any such extension is sure to involve further and more serious losses to the Revenue; whether the increased facilities for deposit suggested by the Question will not increase the risks to depositors in such banks, as well as cause further losses to the Revenue; and, whether there is any Government security guaranteed to the depositors in Trustee Savings Banks?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster), in reply, said, he would answer the last Question first. The figures quoted by the hon. Member in paragraph 1 were substantially correct. But an increase of money deposited with the National Debt Commissioners by the Trustees of Savings Banks would not increase the loss to the Revenue so long as the Commissioners could earn 3 per cent on their investments. On the other hand, an increase in the aggregate amount of deposits would naturally increase the risk of loss to depositors from fraud or mismanagement. There was no Government security guaranteed to the depositors in Trustee Savings Banks, as the hon. Member was aware; the National Debt Commissioners being only liable to the Trustees for moneys remitted to them for investment. With regard to the Questions on the Paper, the Government had carefully considered this subject in the interests of the industrial classes. It had been urged that sufficient opportunity for saving was not afforded by the limit of £30; but, being met with the demand on the part of the Trustee Savings Banks to have the same power extended to them, it was open to this observation—that they might be tempted to give a larger rate of interest than could be afforded by the Post Office, or safely earned. The Government felt that it would be accompanied with some risk if they extended this increase of power to the Trustee Savings Banks. Under these circumstances, and having regard to the opposition with which the Bill was threatened by the Trustee Savings Banks, unless they shared in the extension of the limit of deposit in any one year from £30 to £50, which the Government felt they could not safely accede to, and looking to the period of the Session, the Government thought it best, on the whole, to abandon the proposal to increase the annual limit of deposit from £30 to £50, and to extend to Trustee Savings Banks the facilities for investment in Consols now enjoyed by the Post Office Savings Bank. They regretted the course they had been compelled to take; but they had no alternative at this period of the Session.

MR. HOWELL asked, whether the right hon. Gentleman was not aware that in 1880 a Bill passed through Committee authorizing an extension of the limit of deposit to £100 a-year, and to £300 as a maximum?

Mr. W. H. SMITH said, he was aware that some legislation of that kind passed through Committee; but there were other considerations involved, to which he had not referred, which made them hesitate in concurring in any proposal which would largely increase the amount of deposits held by the Government.

REVENUE BILL.

Mr. GILLIAT (Clapham) appealed to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to consider the expediency of not proceeding with those clauses of the Revenue Bill which it was understood would disturb the existing machinery for the collection of Income Tax.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen) (St. George's, Hanover Square), in reply, said, it was an "omnibus" Bill, and dealt with several matters; but in it there would be clauses to carry out the principle of abolishing the payment of collectors and assessors by poundage. On that matter he had received representations from various parts of the country; and it had also been brought before him by deputations from Chambers of Commerce. The subject appeared to be one in which great interest was taken, and there was a fairly unanimous opinion that some change should be made. It would be with the greatest possible reluctance that he would be forced to abandon this proposal of the Bill; and he trusted the Income Tax Commissioners of the City of London would not meet the clauses with any strong opposition. The Bill would be circulated on Friday.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

In reply to Mr. Mundella (Sheffield, Brightside) and Mr. Bryce (Aberdeen, S.),

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster) said, he understood it would be a convenience to the House that the Lords' Amendments to the Irish Land Law Bill, if there were any, should be taken to-morrow at a quarter past 4 o'clock. The Government were exceedingly anxious that the Amendments of the Lords should be considered with as little delay as possible, and he understood that no objection would be made to them in that House. It would be convenient, probably, that the Education Vote should be taken on Saturday. He should be glad, if it were possible, to take the Diplomatic Vote on Saturday; but he was afraid there would be no chance of doing so. He proposed, unless urgent Business intervened, to take it as the first Business after the Coal Mines, &c. Regulation Bill had passed through Committee. That Bill stood for Monday, and he was anxious to keep an engagement entered into many days ago with the Members representing mining districts. He hoped the House would get through the Bill with fair rapidity. The Customs and Inland Revenue Estimates would be taken in their order, and their order was last.

In reply to Mr. Buchanan (Edinburgh, W.),

Mr. W. H. SMITH said, if there was time the Scotch Education Vote would be taken on Saturday, following the English Vote.

In reply to Sir George Campbell (Kirkcaldy, &c.),

Mr. W. H. SMITH said, the remainder of the Scotch Votes would be taken before the Irish Votes.

In reply to Mr. F. S. Powell (Wigan),

Mr. W. H. SMITH said, that he was under the strongest pledge to the House to take the Coal Mines, &c. Regulation Bill *de die in diem.*

Mr. J. G. TALBOT (Oxford University) asked at what hour the Saturday Sitting would close?

Mr. W. H. SMITH said, he thought it would be for the convenience of the House that the Sitting should terminate on Saturday at 6 o'clock, and he should move that the Standing Order regulating Wednesday Sittings should also apply to Saturday Sittings.

PARLIAMENT—THE NEW RULES OF PROCEDURE (1882) — RULE 2 (ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE) — AFFAIRS OF EGYPT.

Mr. LABOUCHERE, Member for the Borough of Northampton, rose in his place, and asked leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance—namely, our relations with the Turkish and Egyptian

Governments, and the Egyptian people, in regard to Egypt; and our relations with the French and Russian Governments with reference to the recently contemplated Egyptian Treaty with the Porte.

The pleasure of the House not having been signified,

Mr. SPEAKER called on those Members who supported the Motion to rise in their places, and not less than Forty Members having risen accordingly—

Mr. LABOUCHERE said, that very few Members could think he did wrong in moving the adjournment, considering that on this question the House had maintained, in the words of the noble Lord the Prime Minister (the Marquess of Salisbury), an "Egyptian silence" during the present Session, although much had occurred with which hon. Members did not agree. So far as we were concerned, there had been lately negotiated with the Porte a Treaty with regard to Egypt which would have involved us permanently in very heavy obligations, and in the Papers presented to the House there were statements made by Lord Salisbury to which it was necessary to call attention. If the subject were discussed on the Diplomatic Vote, the discussion would be reduced to a sham fight, and hon. Members would not be able to express their views fully. The Treaty, as the House was aware, had vanished, owing to the action of the Porte, who refused to ratify it. There were two important Despatches, Nos. 96 and 97, which were sent by Sir H. Drummond Wolff, and if we acted upon them, although Sir H. Drummond Wolff would have cost a great deal, he would have been almost worth the money. It was wrong to endeavour to negotiate a Treaty with the Sultan without first obtaining the views of those Powers with whom we had been concerned previously in all matters affecting Egypt. A good deal had been heard about the European Concert, and it was never more necessary to maintain it than it was now. We knew how angry Europe was at the time that a Treaty respecting Cyprus was negotiated by Lord Salisbury. The House would also remember how indignant the people of England had been frequently when they thought that Russia was endeavouring to carry on diplomatic action in secret. This Convention was not secret, it was true; but if Turkey had not informed France and Russia of what was going on those countries would have known nothing about the matter. It was a fault to negotiate when we were aware that nothing could be valid without the assent of Europe, and to negotiate in such a way that the arrangements could not be assented to by Europe. Her Majesty's Government had frequently said that our occupation of Egypt was essentially one of a temporary character. Frequently, however, when the Government had been asked to state the term for our withdrawal they had always shrunk from doing so. It was true that in the Treaty Her Majesty's Government agreed to a term; but they insisted upon inserting a clause to the effect that England might go back without the assent of Turkey or Europe, and practically such stipulations had been made by the Government with regard to Egypt that we necessarily should have to return. The country was not left in doubt as to the opinion of Europe. In a despatch from Sir H. Drummond Wolff to Lord Salisbury they saw what were the views both of Russia and of France when those countries heard what England was going to do. Sir H. Drummond Wolff stated that in return for repeated visits he called upon the Russian and French Ambassadors. He went on to say—

> "M. Nelidoff informed me that from the point of view of his Government the Sultan, by giving us the right of re-entry, had practically sacrificed to us a portion of his sovereignty. M. Nelidoff also objected to the want of definition as to the causes that would justify the re-entry. England might look on a movement of troops in Afghanistan as an external danger, and make this a pretext for occupying Egypt. His Excellency said that, speaking personally, he thought Russia might consent that England should be the one Power to whom should be confided the task of restoring order in Egypt; but this must be done under restriction, and Commissioners of other Powers should accompany the English troops. Or he thought that the restoration of order might be effected by more than one Power. Such were his views, which having been to a great extent adopted by his Government, he opposed the ratification. M. de Montebello, with whom I had two interviews, took much the same line. The right of re-entry was destructive to the Mediterranean equilibrium. France was determined never to accept it. As Article 4 now stood, her non-acceptance of the right of re-entry would make our occupation of the country permanent."

There was an enclosure in the Despatch

containing copy of a letter from the Count of Montebello to the Sultan, the language of which was exceedingly strong—

> "In case the Convention should be ratified, the French Government will devote their attention to the protection of their personal interests, which will be injured by the destruction of the balance of power in the Mediterranean, and they will take with this object such measures as may in their opinion be necessary. As the disinterested policy of France can alone protect the Ottoman Empire against the encroachments and ambitious aims of England, the maintenance of this friendship will be considered by your Imperial Majesty as much more advantageous. If your Majesty does not ratify the Convention, the French Government will protect and guarantee you against the consequences, whatsoever they may be, that may result from the non-ratification."

He (Mr. Labouchere) presumed that that Despatch to the Sultan was circulated in Constantinople because it was telegraphed to a journal in London. The right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) was asked whether he knew anything about it, and he gathered that the right hon. Gentleman said that he knew absolutely nothing about it. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] He said that he had received no information.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): I will mention at once what I did say, because it is perfectly absurd to attempt to deceive the House in a matter of this sort, and I trust that I am not capable of doing so. I was asked as to the truth of a statement in the *Daily News* as to a certain Note addressed to the Sultan, and I said that—

> "The Government are not in possession of the contents of the alleged Note. No such Note has been communicated to the Government, nor has any communication upon the subject been made to the French Government."

When I gave that answer on June 28 the Government were not in possession of the contents of the Note. They simply had a reference to it and to its purport in telegrams from Constantinople, which clearly were not of a reliable character. The text of the Note, as far as is known now, was not in our possession until the 2nd of July, and I may say that up to this moment we have not an authentic copy of the Note.

MR. LABOUCHERE said, that the Note was sent home in a Despatch by Sir H. Drummond Wolff. He certainly did not intend to imply that the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs had any intention to lead the House into error, but he thought that the reply given was that no such note had been seen. But this was a matter of mere detail. What was far more important was that when Sir H. Drummond Wolff had been put in possession of this most menacing Despatch, by which Turkey was warned against the encroachments and ambitious aims of England, and told that if the Convention was not ratified the French Government would protect and guarantee the Sultan against the consequences, whatsoever they might be, that might result from the non-ratification, neither he nor Lord Salisbury could have supposed for an instant that the Convention, if ratified, would not injure this Country and put us into a false position with regard to Europe. It was therefore not only a criminal course, but a most stupid course to try and force the hand of the Sultan and induce him to sign this Convention, knowing that by so doing we should alienate France, and that the Convention would become the law of Europe without the consent of France and Russia, both of whom had protested against it in a strong manner. He was exceedingly glad that there was no Treaty. It had, however, left a painful impression on Europe, which always existed when Lord Salisbury was in power. He wished further to call attention to one or two statements made by Lord Salisbury in the despatches as to future policy. Writing to Sir H. Drummond Wolff, Lord Salisbury had said:—

> "Her Majesty's Government have no intention of leaving Egypt without ample security that the social order which they have re-established there shall not be endangered either by external attack or internal trouble. Whether the Convention be ratified or not, they will adhere to that intention."

This practically meant that if Turkey did not sign the Convention we intended to remain in Egypt for ever. England had not organized the Egytian Army? How, then, could the Government say that they would only leave Egypt when that country was preserved by the Egyptian Army from internal danger?

On June 4 Lord Salisbury made a further statement which was of importance. He said—

> "Should the Porte refuse to ratify on the appointed day, Her Majesty's Government will be freed from their engagements to the Porte in regard to Egypt, and will remain free to take their own course."

What did this mean? He did not understand how the mere fact of the Sultan objecting to this Treaty freed England from previous engagements. If this were so, nothing could be more easy than to free ourselves from any Treaty in any country, and especially a country weaker than ourselves, Lord Salisbury was good enough to supplement these two statements of his by another at the Mansion House yesterday. Lord Salisbury said that the fact of our going to Egypt imposed obligations upon us, and that we should have ample security from internal and external attack. He had already dealt with the subject of internal attack and the statement that we should not leave the country until there was an army capable of putting down rebellion. But Lord Salisbury went on to say that we should not leave the country until it could pursue its course of prosperity itself. There had not been much prosperity in Egypt since England had been there. Lord Salisbury, continuing, said—

> "It is pleasant to think that our sojourn in Egypt is accompanied by the greatest benefits to those among whom we dwell. . . . The foundations of future national prosperity are being laid broad and strong. . . . We may feel that we are pursuing an object which confers no immediate benefit on ourselves, but is subservient to the highest interests of philanthropy and humanity."

He had never heard a Minister talk about doing anything in the "interests of humanity and philanthropy" without having a very strong opinion that he was talking nonsense. It was only when a Minister was going to do something improper and unjust that he talked about "humanity and philanthropy." Sir H. Drummond Wolff was sent out to Egypt by the present Government, and this Country had spent a large amount of money upon him. Was the Government going to take his advice? Sir H. Drummond Wolff, writing to Lord Salisbury, said—

> "I have the honour to call your attention to the abnormal condition of the financial system of Egypt, and the very great hardship it inflicts on the people of the country. It would be a blot on any permanent arrangement if some attempt were not made to alleviate the heavy burden entailed on the fellaheen of the debt which crushes their industry and often deprives them of their property and means of livelihood. In the schemes which have been put forward for the readjustment of the finances, this important point has always been overlooked. Attempts have been made to establish an equilibrium of Egyptian finance, in which the amount payable for the debt was an almost inevitable basis, and even when the sinking funds have been suspended, this course has been taken rather to sustain the external credit of the country than to better the lot of the people. If the debt had been run up by wars or extravagance sanctioned by the people, it might be right to continue saddling them with this intolerable load. But they had no voice in the matter. This evil has been recognized more than once; but no attempt has been made to diminish it, except on one occasion when Lord Northbrook recommended the diminution of the land tax by £450,000 annually. This measure has only been partially carried out. It is impossible to measure the political effect of this state of things on a population thus mortgaged to the creditors of former bad masters. It must always be the cause of a discontent, not less deep from not being manifest, and it would always render the fellaheen anxious to join any popular leader who would promise them relief. Such a condition does not exist and would not be tolerated elsewhere, and in a settlement which it is hoped may promote tranquillity throughout the country the present fiscal system is a danger that cannot be overlooked."

That was the testimony of Sir H. Drummond Wolff, and with such a state of things was it to be expected that we should have tranquillity in Egypt? Would the Government act on that Despatch of Sir H. Drummond Wolff? He (Mr. Labouchere) feared they would not, and that Lord Salisbury had no idea of acting on Sir H. Drummond Wolff's advice, especially since Her Majesty's Government had taken over to themselves that very eminent Gentleman who was the *fons et origo* of the Egyptian Debt—he meant the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen). The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who had forged the chains which now bound the Egyptian people, would, no doubt, do his best to act with an unbiased mind; but his connection with the matter was of such a kind that it would probably be impossible for him to do so. The right hon. Gentleman went out as the Representative of the foreign bondholders and rivetted the chains on the Egyptians. It was clear that we had gone to Egypt and remained there for one object only, and that was for the benefit of the bondholders. In 1864 the total Revenue of Egypt was £4,937,000, and Egypt then owed £3,392,000. That was a loan negotiated by the right hon. Gentleman, or by Frühling and Goschen. In the previous 10 years, from 1854 to 1864, Egypt made enormous progress and must have been fairly prosperous. In 1864 there was a second Goschen loan of £5,804,000. According to Mr. Cave, Egypt received £4,864,000, or £1,000,000 less. The loan was issued at 93, and the charge for issuing it was £554,000, or 11 per cent. [Mr. GOSCHEN dissented.] Well, he did not know where the money went, but he knew that Messrs. Frühling and Goschen were responsible for that amount. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer was a member of the firm at that time, and therefore was as responsible as Mr. Frühling. They could not throw it all on Frühling. The profit was immense and led others who were as anxious to make profit to look upon Egypt as the land of Goschen, and they made a rush for it. Loan after loan succeeded for the next 10 years up to 1874, when the Funded Debt of Egypt was £68,000,000; but the entire sum paid to Egypt was £45,000,000, and the only available asset was £9,000,000 paid for the Canal. The rest disappeared in the enormous interest, which was something between 25 and 12½ per cent, according to Mr. Cave. Egypt could not pay, and here came our first interference—we purchased the Canal shares. There had been a good deal of Conservative boasting because we had purchased those shares at £4,000,000. That was our first step in interfering in Egypt for the benefit of the Egyptians. Sir H. Drummond Wolff, writing to Lord Salisbury on the Suez Canal shares, says:—

> "Your Lordship is aware that the price of £4,000,000 paid for the shares of the ex-Khedive by Her Majesty's Government was originally expended by him out of the money collected from the people. In lieu of any profit on this head, they are now paying interest to Her Majesty's Government. Under the original concession 15 per cent was to go to the Egyptian Government. But this revenue of the net profits of the Canal was subsequently sold, thus depriving the Egyptian people of their last chance of obtaining any return for the sums expended out of their toil."

Our next step was sending out Mr. Cave, who found that the total Debt, including the Floating Debt, was £90,000,000. Mr. Cave made no reduction in the interest of the Debt, but he altered the incidence of the Floating Debt. The Egyptians paid a heavy land tax. It was agreed under the Moukabala arrangement that if the Egyptians paid for 12 years about 45 per cent above the existing land tax, at the end of that time they should have to pay only half the original land tax. Mr. Cave, in reporting on the finances of Egypt, said that the arrangement was a ruinous one to the State. And so it was. In 1876 the Khedive abrogated the Moukabala and agreed to repay all the payments which had been made under that arrangement. Unfortunately the proceeds of this Moukabala loan had been devoted to pay off the Goschen loan. On May 12, 1879, Messrs. Frühling and Goschen wrote to Lord Derby in these words—

> "In accordance with the suggestion made by you in your conversation with the Right Hon. G. J. Goschen yesterday, we beg to enclose his short memoranda stating the case of the bondholders of the Egyptian Government loans of 1862 and 1864, which we issued to the public. We shall be greatly obliged if you will urge on General Stanton to support our protest. We accordingly venture to urge on your Lordship to grant us such assistance as you may see fit to render in excluding, as suggested by the Right Hon. S. Cave in his Report, the loan of 1864 from the operation of the decree just issued by the Khedive, and in securing some recognition of the prior claims of the holders of the loan of 1862."

Following upon this, Lord Derby, on May 19, wrote to General Stanton as follows:—

> "I transmit to you copies of a correspondence with Messrs. Frühling and Goschen, who have requested the assistance of Her Majesty's Government to obtain the exclusion from the late decree of the Khedive of the loan of 1864 and to obtain some recognition of prior claims to the holders of the 1862 loan, and in accordance with the reply returned to them I have to request you to give such unofficial assistance as you possibly can to the agents of the parties interested."

"Coming events cast their shadows before," for it seemed that on that occasion the Conservative Government were exceedingly friendly to the right hon. Gentleman, and the right hon. Gentleman had retorted by being exceedingly friendly to them. In the same year the right hon. Gentleman went out himself to Egypt along with Messrs. Joubert, who represented the French bondholders. Now, it was frequently supposed that the right hon. Gentleman went out in an independent position, as an eminent financier come to bless and to aid Egypt. As a matter of fact, he went out, after a meeting called by the Foreign Bondholders' Association, as the agent of the foreign bondholders, and as the agent necessarily of Messrs. Frühling and Goschen, and he was not an independent person at all. He would not have acted fairly to his constituents if he had not made it his first business to look after the interests of the bondholders who sent him. What did the right hon. Gentleman do? He took the loan and divided it into Preferred and Deferred Debt, and he re-established the Moukabala and insisted on it, thus renewing what Mr. Cave had called an unjust thing.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen) (St. George's, Hanover Square) said, that, on the contrary, the Moukabala had been re-established against his wish, and that he objected to it as a bad tax, and as being entirely against his principles. It was re-established at the wish of the Khedive himself as a primary condition, and in deference to pressure put upon his Highness, and the decision was arrived at before he himself had reached Egypt. He hoped the hon. Gentleman would accept this statement, which was simply and absolutely correct.

Mr. LABOUCHERE said, of course, he would readily accept the right hon. Gentleman's statement. The right hon. Gentleman said it was entirely against his principles to re-establish the Moukabala; but he could only say that the right hon. Gentleman had sacrificed his principles then, as many on his (the Opposition) side of the House thought he had since. There was then in Egypt a Minister of Finance—a man of some eminence—Ismail Sadik—the right hand of the Khedive; this man was opposed to the establishmant of the Moukabala, and to the projects of the right hon. Gentleman. The right hon. Gentleman said he would not treat with him. Ismail was at once arrested, taken to the Nile, and no one ever heard more of him. It was fully understood he was drowned. The right hon. Gentleman did more than establish the Moukabala; in his anxiety for Egypt he established a system of European control. We were not only to be behind the scenes to see that the Egyptians paid the bondholders, but we sent taskmasters there in the flesh to make them do it. The whole country was pervaded by a vast swarm of locusts. If the right hon. Gentleman was forced to consent to the re-establishment of the Moukabala by the Khedive, the locusts were his own idea. At any rate—although Egypt was admittedly overtaxed—these locusts received £378,000 per annum, and this was put as an extra task upon the Egyptians. From 1876 to 1879 there was one great and persistent attempt made in Egypt to enforce the payment of the taxes, so as to enable the country to pay the extortionate interest on the loans. The Khedive was stripped of his property and the people ruined. Well, despite all this, in 1877 there was difficulty in paying the July coupon; its payment did take place, but our own Consul General declared that this result had only been achieved by the ruin of the peasantry, the crops being hypothecated, and the taxes collected in advance. These interests were thus wrung from a peasantry already crushed by taxation. The British Government knew how the payment of the coupons was arrived at, and yet in 1879 our Consul General was found reminding his Highness the Khedive that—"Any change in the engagements which he had lately made would be most ruinous." At length the position became impossible. The European *employés* were paid, but the Egyptians were not. The Revenue was nearly £10,000,000; but after payment of the interest on the Tribute and the Canal shares only about £1,500,000 were left for the administration of the country, the rest was swallowed up by the bondholders. Even the loan agent felt it was a mistake to kill the goose that laid the golden eggs, and therefore an International Commission was established, with Sir Rivers Wilson, who was sent out as President. The Commission came to the conclusion that a little more should be spent upon Europeans, and decided that there should be both a French and an English Minister to see that the Khedive fulfilled his obligations. The Ministers, however, did not reduce the Debt or the salaries of the Europeans; there were 2,500 officers, and they put them on half-pay and refused to pay off their arrears, which was certainly a novel way to keep the country quiet. They increased the land tax. At that time there were a number of the fellahs who were not subjected to the *corvée*, but it was determined that they must pay for exemption. Naturally there was disturbance, and the Assembly of Notables was called together, and insisted on their country not being pillaged and ruined in this manner. The Khedive dismissed these Ministers, and tried to make two ends meet. We were indignant, and obtained a decree from the Sultan dismissing the Khedive from his position as Ruler of Egypt. Then we set up Tewfik, an innocent, quiet, harmless sort of person, and entirely our instrument; but even so we had found we could not get blood out of a stone, and that it was necessary we should do something to alter the incidence of taxation and reduce its burden. A Commission of Liquidation was then appointed, and the interest of the loans was reduced, but it still amounted to 10 or 12 per cent. The Moukabala was then again abrogated; but did we—who were represented on the Commission—act fairly towards the Egyptian peasantry? These poor men had paid over £17,000,000 sterling for it. They could not do so themselves however. They borrowed money at high and ruinous interest, and it might have been supposed that by any Commission of Liquidation in which we were represented these men would have been paid back, and treated quite as well as the bondholders who had not paid the money. We looked after the bondholders; but we told the peasants that for 50 years it would pay 1 per cent, and at the end of the time the whole £17,000,000 would be swept away. But that was only the half. In 1882 the rebellion of Arabi took place——

Mr. WOOTTON ISAACSON (Tower Hamlets, Stepney) asked the hon. Member to state the amount of interest that had been paid upon the loans, and in what way the International Commission had reduced the rate?

Mr. SPEAKER: I think that it is my duty to interfere. The hon. Gentleman rose to move the adjournment of the House for the discussion of a definite matter of urgent public importance. Although the House has given its sanction, the remarks of the hon. Gentleman cannot be said to refer to a definite matter of urgent public importance, because he is going over the whole relations of this country with France, and proposes to do so with regard to Russia as well as Egypt; and I think it is an abuse of the Standing Order to take so wide a range.

Mr. LABOUCHERE said, that was his object. He complained that we were still remaining in Egypt, and that Lord Salisbury had stated in despatches and in his speech at the Mansion House that we had gone there to do good to the Egyptians. His object in moving the adjournment was to raise the point whether we ought to remain there instead of coming away, and to show that so long as we had been in the country we had been a persistent curse to Egypt. But he would not refer further to the finances. He thought, however, that he had said enough to prove his point. In January, 1882, General Gordon wrote of the Egyptians themselves—

> "It is reiterated over and over again that Egypt is prosperous and contented. I do not think that it is altered at all, except in improving the finances for the bondholders. The prisons are as full of unfortunates as they ever were."

At the same time Consul Rowsell in his Report stated—

> "The taxes are never collected without the aid of the kourbash, which, as a rule, is administered very freely, and without which the tax collection makes very little progress. Failing to pay, it also is a common occurrence for a man to be thrown into prison, when the kourbash is again brought into play, until the amount demanded is forthcoming. Beyond the kourbash and imprisonments, no other cruelty or torture attends the collection of taxes."

Owing to continuous protests, Lord Northbrook was sent out, and he recommended that the land tax should be reduced by £420,000. It had not been reduced by this amount, however. We had put an end to the *corvée*, which was worth £250,000, and the Egyptians were obliged to pay this amount because the *corvée* did not exist. Then there were further negotiations. In 1885 a discussion had taken place between the European Powers as to Egypt, and we guaranteed a loan of £9,000,000, which was absorbed by the payment of the Alexandria indemnities and of the interest on previous loans. It was also agreed that the coupons should be taxed for two years, but not longer without European investigation. But in March, 1887, this period of two years came to an end, and, at the time, the question was raised in the House. Again, Egypt found it impossible to pay these coupons. What did we do? We agreed to pay them. There were certain mythical claims on the part of the Egyptians upon the British Exchequer "vamped up," and we paid them in order to enable the Egyptians to pay the coupons, and to save them from this European investigation. He thought he had shown that we were in Egypt for the bondholders, and that, far from doing good in Egypt, we were creating a situation which must—as Sir H. Drummond Wolff said — tend to create discontent and disorder. Beyond establishing gin palaces and brothels and taxing the people, he did not see what good we had done there. Far from introducing representative government into Egypt, we had done away with what there was of it, and had not sought to build it up again. A few months ago Questions were asked in the House as to two of our officers in the Army of Occupation. He cited the case in order to show the evils inherent in the system of having an Army of Occupation in a country like Egypt. These officers went out to shoot near the Pyramids. They tramped over the crops of the peasants of one of the villages in the neighbourhood. The peasants came out and, naturally, tried to stop them. The officers shot one of the peasants and wounded one or two others; thereupon, as was only natural, the peasants took the officers into the village and somewhat maltreated them. Then we got our instrument Tewfik to send down two gentlemen whom he called Judges, and we added an English Judge. These officials decided that the peasants were in the wrong; and we marched a British regiment into the neighbourhood, and the villagers were flogged by hundreds. Nothing more monstrous than this had ever been heard of, not even in the Franco-German War. On what grounds and under what law, Egyptian or English, were these men condemned to be flogged, and on what ground was a British regiment turned into an Egyptian village to act as executioners on the unfortunate inhabitants? We had spent millions of money in Egypt; we still had there an Army costing £134 per man per annum; and yet the country had not benefited either financially or politically. We had put ourselves in the wrong with Egypt, and had established a permanent sore with France. We had created an ill-feeling with Turkey, and no one believed for a moment what we said when we asserted that we were anxious to leave the country, and were only remaining there for the good of the Egyptians. The other Powers knew as well as we did that we were remaining there only for the good of the bondholders. But the House was told that it was necessary to remain in Egypt on account of our position in India. Nothing of the sort. It had been decided that in the event of war the Suez Canal should be neutralized and the Cape route utilized. We had the means of stopping all ships of war belonging to a country with which we were in conflict; and therefore it seemed to him that the idea of the necessity of the occupation of Egypt or of the occupation of the Suez Canal in order to secure our passage being free to India in case of war was entirely exploded. Lord Salisbury did not insist on the point at the Mansion House; he put our occupation solely on the ground of the good of Egypt. According to the Treaty negotiated by Sir H. Drummond Wolff we were bound to re-occupy the country if order was disturbed. But he would point out that there was no proposal in the Treaty to reduce the debt or the interest. Therefore, the House might assume that, as far as the Treaty was concerned, there was no intention to reduce it. He should like to show by figures that we made that Treaty with the deliberate intention and belief not only that we might go back, but that we should go back to the country. The Army at present cost £130,000. The Egyptians paid us £200,000, or a total of £330,000. But Moukhtar Pasha said that 13,000 men at least would be requisite in order to enable the Egyptian Government without us to maintain order and defend the country against external dangers. The cost of these 13,000 men would be £420,000. How was Egypt to provide the £90,000? It could not do so. The theory of Sir H. Drummond Wolff was that the Egyptians were paying too many taxes already. Unless we reduced that taxation, therefore, it would be absolutely impossible, according to the opinion of the best experts, for Egypt to maintain such an Army as would enable the people to preserve order and render it unnecessary for us to go back. It was said that if we left Egypt France would go there; but, for his part, he did not believe it. There was a time when France threatened to do so; but then a great deal of the Egyptian debt was in the hands of the great houses of Paris. This was no longer the case. At present we might fairly make a bargain. France was most anxious that we should withdraw from Egypt. The other Powers did not care much about the matter. We might make this arrangement—that if we withdrew, and did not return without the consent of Europe, Egypt itself should be neutralized, and no Power should claim to go there because the Egyptian debt was not paid. The Egyptian debt should simply be treated like the debt of Peru, or of any other country. They might have some agreement about the neutrality of the Suez Canal and as to the Capitulations, which required modification. The financial question was the pressing question at this moment. As Sir H. Drummond Wolff told them, there could be no prosperity for Egypt if more than half its income was taken up for the debt and spent out of the country. He (Mr. Labouchere) had moved the adjournment of the House because he considered that the House had some right to call upon the Government to give them some sort of a pledge that they would not continue to spoil and harry the Egyptians on account of the bondholders, but would make the reductions which Sir H. Drummond Wolff said were necessary for the well-being of Egypt.

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.), in seconding the Motion, said he regarded the question as urgent on account of the condition of affairs existing between this country and France. He asked whether it was a decent, a fair, or a wise thing to cover with every form of insult and outrage a country like France, because we fancied that she was weak, and that we, as Lord Salisbury and Sir H. Drummond Wolff were never tired of saying, had the German Ambassador at our back. Lord Salisbury had said that when in future we were asked to answer the annoying and perpetual demands of France and Turkey for the evacuation of Egypt we should point to the non-signature of the ratification of the Convention as releasing us from all our previous declarations in regard to Egypt. Now, he would ask the Government to put their finger on any fact which had set them free from the pledges which had been made over and over again in that House and in official documents in reference to the evacuation of Egypt. The Convention was the result of negotiations conducted between our Representative and the Porte behind the back of Europe; and one of the conditions in it was that it was not to come into operation until all the Great Powers had signed it. The conduct of the French Government towards ours had been courteous, honest, and frank, and the moment they knew what was the nature of the Convention they said in firm and courteous language that they could not assent to it.

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir James Fergusson) (Manchester, N.E.) asked what the hon. Member was quoting from?

Mr. DILLON said, the report of the interview between the French Ambassador and Lord Salisbury. He could not quote in detail.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster) asked the hon. Member to quote one single interview between the French Ambassador and Lord Salisbury.

Mr. DILLON said, there were a number of them in those despatches. He could not find them then, but he was confident that anybody who looked into the matter would see that there were plenty. The language of France and Russia to Turkey was exceedingly plain; and where, he asked, was there an instance of a single word of insult or menace used against England, except, perhaps, towards the conclusion of the negotiations, where France was spoken of as being the only protector of the Sultan against the ambitious designs of England in Egypt; and that was after a considerable period, during which England intimated plainly that she was determined to go on with the Convention in spite of the objections of France, and put pressure on Turkey to make her agree to it? Any declaration on the part of this country of an intention permanently to occupy or annex Egypt would amount to a declaration of war against France. There was a tone of hostility in all the papers towards France which could not but create ill-feeling in that country. In fact, France was covered with insult. They were dealing here with one of the most delicate points, and it was not only France but Russia which was being outraged. He had no animosity to the German nation, but he thought it was an ill-advised thing to be always dragging the German Ambassador into this question of backing up England. Of course, he backed up England, because the object was to sow discord between England and France. The longer the occupation of Egypt was prolonged, the longer it was sure to last. The majority of the English people wished to see the last British soldier out of Egypt; but there were underground, backstair, and malign influences at work for financial purposes. That influence sought to defeat the British nation in this matter. There were a certain number of men interested in financial business who hoodwinked the people, and who would not leave Egypt alone until the last pound had been paid. This operation of constituting the British Army the tax-collectors and the police of the bondholders was expensive and disastrous to the British name. The indignation of the Egyptian people was increasing against England. There was not one in 10,000 who would not hail the day when the last English soldier departed. The occupation was a curse to Egypt, and he held that it ought to cease at once. What did the Correspondent of *The Times* say? He said that the withdrawal of the troops meant anarchy, and that this would be more true five years hence than now. The worst of it was that this Egyptian business might involve this country in a frightful war with France. The taxpayers of Egypt had been robbed of £200,000 a-year for two years in order that the coupons might be paid. It was clear that it was never intended that the coupons should be paid if it could not be done without continuing the special tax; and it was an infamous robbery that the fellaheen should be sacrificed in spite of the pledge which had been given to them. A bogus surplus had been created partly at the expense of the Egyptian taxpayers, who had been robbed in the manner stated, partly at the expense of the taxpayers of Great Britain by Votes passed in that House, and partly by drafts on the loan of £5,000,000 guaranteed in 1885; and this bogus surplus had been used to pay the coupons. A deficit had really existed each year, and it had been made into a surplus in a dishonest way and for a dishonest purpose. In the month of March last a Question was put in the House as to whether the taxes upon the coupons would be repaid or not, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer said that the Government of Egypt were considering their financial position with a view to determining the point, while on the very same night the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs said the amount of the surplus was known, and as it was more than sufficient for this purpose the Egyptian Government had given the necessary directions to carry out the arrangement that had been made. It was a nice condition when two Ministers made inconsistent statements on the same night. If we were to continue in occupation of Egypt the House ought to insist upon having every year a discussion on the finances of Egypt, in order that the people of the country might be protected from such a fraud as had been practised upon them. There was a small ring of men who had control of this question and who were responsible to nobody; and the figures were given in the despatches in such an involved way that it required study to get at the bottom of them. Amounts were stated sometimes in Egyptian and sometimes in English pounds. A regular discussion was necessary in order to turn the light of day on the subject, and to prevent the fraud, robbery, and oppression which were being practised on the people of Egypt.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn."—(*Mr. Labouchere.*)

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON said, that when the policy and proceedings of Her Majesty's Government were arraigned in that House it was desirable that a charge should be formulated, and that they should have to deal with something tangible. On this occasion the Government could not know beforehand what form the attack was to take, and many things had been brought up and put into a general bill of indictment. Most of them were not matters of to-day, and the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) had chiefly directed their attention to what might be described as ancient history, his main object apparently being to make a personal attack upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer. That was the head and front of his speech. The House would desire to consider our present and future relations rather than matters which had been discussed over and over again and amply and fully disposed of. The late Convention was referred to by the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) as a secret Treaty negotiated behind the backs of the other Powers of Europe. Surely there was no secrecy about a Convention which was negotiated between a special British Commissioner and a Minister of the Sultan, and which was contemplated by the Convention of October, 1885. When a Turkish Commissioner and a British Commissioner went to Egypt to inquire and report on the condition of the country with a view to a future arrangement it was manifest that an arrangement would be made, although it would be necessary afterwards to consult the other Powers. As to indignation about this so-called secret Treaty, he did not know in what quarter this indignation was to be found, and the Government had not heard of it. [Mr. LABOUCHERE: In France.] Undoubtedly there were great difficulties to be faced; it was impossible to be unmindful of the susceptibilities of the other Powers; and it had been the anxious desire of the Government to consider those susceptibilities from the first. He repudiated the statement made by the hon. Member for East Mayo, that France had been covered with insults in this business; a more unfounded statement was never made. There was not the slightest foundation for saying that Her Majesty's Government had treated France with the utmost discourtesy. There had been, undoubtedly, features in the negotiations at Constantinople which had been unfortunate and unusual. It was unusual that an Ambassador of a friendly Power should present to the Sultan a note such as that which had been referred to in the debate. But that note was a very private note, and it had not the formality of many official Papers which were made known to the world. It would probably never be known how the note came to be published; but there were many subterranean ways between the Press and officials at Constantinople. As to the Government being charged with any want of courtesy and consideration towards France or any other European Power, it was impossible to bring any proof of such a statement. He rose at the beginning of the hon. Member's speech to disclaim having concealed anything from the House that he could have stated, as having misled the House in the matter of the Memorandum. The Government had received by telegram a very brief account of a note, as it had been derived by hearsay by Sir H. Drummond Wolff. Its accuracy could not be relied upon. It had been received in a very indirect manner, and he would have incurred a very great responsibility had he admitted to the House that such a note had been submitted by the French Ambassador to the Sultan. It would be absolutely impossible to conduct the foreign affairs of this country with any safety if admissions were made without positive knowledge on the part of the Government. He stated with regard to this note that the Government were not in possession of the facts, and that the Memorandum had not been made known to them. It had not been made known to them officially up to the present day.

DR. CLARK (Caithness) asked whether the note was not included in the despatches?

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON said, that he had already informed the House that it was made known indirectly to Sir H. Drummond Wolff that such a note had been presented. Sir H. Drummond Wolff mentioned in one of his despatches that what was known of the note was not in its original language, and could not be verbally relied upon. Then the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) had stated that Lord Salisbury had declared that England was now free from her engagement with respect to the Porte. It was only in respect of the evacuation of Egypt that Her Majesty's Government were left free, in consequence of the non-ratification of the Convention. It was manifest that every engagement which England had made with Turkey must be absolutely adhered to, and he should like to know what engagement England could be charged with not fulfilling. Under the Convention of 1885, by which a certain portion of the loan was to be applied to the expenses of occupation, our position in Egypt was recognized as it had not been recognized before. But Turkey and other Powers were anxious that our occupation should not be unlimited; and therefore a strong desire was expressed that some limit should be fixed. He thought it would be seen that there were considerable inducements to name a time, with the view of securing the co-operation and consent of other Powers. With some reluctance, therefore, Her Majesty's Government consented to a time being mentioned at which, if circumstances permitted, the British troops and officers should be withdrawn. That engagement was entered into with some reluctance, because Her Majesty's Government had had experience in times past of the danger of fixing limits to our stay in Egypt. More than once Parliament had been told of the time at which the evacuation would take place; but the hopes under which the promises were given had been frustrated. The condition was therefore laid down that England would retain the right of re-entry if Egypt should be menaced externally or internally, and that evacuation should not take place at the time fixed if the state of the country did not warrant it. He ventured to say that the country would have been extremely dissatisfied if Her Majesty's Government had agreed to retire at three years or five years, or any other number of years, unless they had retained the contingent rights of finishing the work which they had undertaken and of safeguarding the interests over which they had made such great sacrifices. The engagement which they were free from—namely, that of leaving Egypt in five years—was dependent upon and coupled with other engagements in the Convention, which, not being ratified, fell to the ground. Sir H. Drmmond Wolff had done good work in calling attention to the wants of Egypt, and to the manner in which it could be relieved from embarrassment; and he protested against the argument that Her Majesty's Government and the British Agency in Egypt had not done their duty. The statement had been made that taxation in Egypt had not been reduced; and his right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer had been attacked with reference to the financial question. Taxation could not be reduced if Egypt fulfilled her engagements. It was extremely unfortunate that the taxation was heavy and that it could not be reduced. But was it desirable that the country, which they hoped to put upon its legs, and leave in a firm and prosperous condition, should commence by repudiating its engagements, as, perhaps, the hon. Member for East Mayo might be ready to suggest?

Mr. DILLON remarked, that the right hon. Gentleman had no right to attribute anything of the kind to him. What he said by no means bore that interpretation.

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON said, that, at any rate, such a thing was not at all desirable, and would not be allowed by other Powers. Had this Government done anything to reduce the charges upon Egypt? Had anything resulted from the mission of Messrs. Goschen and Joubert to Egypt? Undoubtedly those gentlemen went to Egypt to endeavour to put the finances of that country on a better footing; and a regular system, in the interests of economy, was established, which had not existed before. Following on that came various measures which reduced the capital and the interest. The rate of interest was reduced from 7 to 4 per cent, which was a lower rate than that of any other country in the world.

Mr. LABOUCHERE said, the present rate was 5 per cent.

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON said, that was so as regarded the Unified Debt; but the average of the debt was only 4 per cent. The charge for the debt of Egypt, which was £103,000,000, amounted to a little over £4,000,000. Therefore, great financial benefit had resulted to Egypt from the British occupation and the improvements which had been effected; and though the taxation might still be high, the people were able to bear it far more easily than before. The great proportion of the taxation of Egypt was derived from a Land Tax, and the incidence of that tax had been always pointed to as one of the heaviest burdens of the country. But would the House believe that last year only 36 persons had been expropriated or evicted for the non-payment of the Land Tax, and in the year before 122? Whereas formerly this Land Tax was extracted from the people with many cruelties, that was no longer the case; and the hon. Gentleman had to go back five years for an instance of torture or corporal punishment used in the recovery of the tax. Such cruelties had been abolished, justice had been purified, the prisons had been turned from disgraceful and miserable dens into places of detention which might compare favourably with the prisons of more civilized countries, the officials did their duty well, and bribery, which was once so common among them, was now very rare. The Army, too, which had been so large and expensive, was gradually being reduced in numbers and cost, and service in the Army was no longer dreaded as it was before. The Egyptian, instead of being dragged from his home and forced to serve, often without pay, was now well paid, well fed, and well cared for by his officers. The hon. Member for East Mayo denied that there was a surplus. The fact was that there was a surplus which had been earned just as it was earned in any country by the Revenue exceeding the Expenditure. The fact was that the receipts for the last two years sufficed to repay the Five per Cent coupons, and, on the whole, there was a surplus for the two years of something like £40,000.

Mr. LABOUCHERE said, that it was stated in the Blue Book that the abolition of the *corvée* would cost £250,000, and then followed the words—"This sum is still paid by the people."

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON said, that the Government had promised the House Papers which would be in the hands of hon. Members shortly—he believed in about eight or 10 days—and which he trusted would satisfy them on that point. But the £250,000 became a charge on the year in lieu of the forced labour formerly exacted. For instance, the irrigation of the canals was performed by hired labour instead of taking people away long distances from their fields and compelling them to do the work, to their great injury and the injury of their country. Land actually went out of cultivation because people were taken away such distances from their fields. The best way that the burdens of the people of Egypt could be lightened was that relief should be given from this burdensome tax. He did not mean to say that the *corvée* for clearing the canals had been altogether abolished; it had been abolished to the extent of about 66 per cent. It had been abolished in its more severe and oppressive form where the people were taken away long distances from their homes. The *corvée* on the canals was retained only where it was lightest, where the men did the work near their own land. But even that was in the course of being reduced, and he hoped in a few years we should see the end of it. As to the coupons, he gave the House in February the figures showing that there was a surplus left of nearly £300,000 more than the estimate. He stated last year, and the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) also stated, that there was no choice in the matter, and that we were bound to pay the Five per Cent coupons if the revenue sufficed for the purpose. It did suffice for the purpose, and we paid them. Hon. Members ought not to confound two things — the revenues of Egypt and the revenues assigned to the payment of debt. If the revenues assigned for the service of the debt were sufficient we were bound to pay. He told the House last February that the revenues were sufficient for the purpose, and if the estimates continued to be realized for the remaining part of 1886-7 the country would have a surplus on the two years. As to a Budget for Egypt, it would be a capital thing if there were no fear of disappointment; but the estimates might lead to disappointment. For instance, a rise of 1*s.* per cwt. on sugar made a difference to the Government of Egypt of £50,000 a-year; and a rise of 1*d.* per lb. on cotton made a difference of £40,000 a-year on the produce of the State land, while it would put £1,000,000 sterling into the pocket of the producer. These things could not be foreseen, and there were complications also arising from the different times at which the accounts were made up, which rendered it more difficult than in this country to give an accurate forecast of the financial results of the year. Now, he must express his surprise that the hon. Member for Northampton should have thought it worth his while to pervert that unfortunate incident which occurred in March last of the accidental shooting of some Natives by English officers in order to found upon it a general charge against the attitude of the English to the Natives. The hon. Member did not state the facts with even approximate correctness. The officers were out shooting quails, and some men were travelling along on camels, when a careless discharge of a gun struck some of them slightly as they passed. There was great indignation on the part of the Natives, who made an attack upon the officers, and during the struggle a gun went off as it was being wrenched from the hands of one of the party, the shot killing one of the Natives. That was a very unfortunate accident, but it was hardly a matter on which to frame a general charge as to the attitude of the English to the Egyptians. Again, it was asked, "What good did we do in Egypt?" We had done much good. We had regularized the Administration, and lightened substantially the burdens of the people. The cultivated area had been largely extended, and year by year the country was being relieved by the scientific appliances which had been introduced from the deterioration which previously it had undergone. "What good was Egypt to us?" If the hon. Member in putting that question thought that the gate to the East was of no value to a great commercial country with more than three-fourths of the whole traffic passing down the Canal belonging to it, then he could only say the hon. Member thought differently from every other nation in Europe. He did not think the people of this country would be so blind and foolish as to suppose that the highway for commerce to which all other nations attached such great importance was of none to us, whose commercial affairs were so immeasurably larger. The position of the Canal was one which ought to be secure to all nations. The Government desired no selfish aims in connection with it. They only desired Egypt to be protected from external danger, to keep open the Eastern highway, and to benefit the people of Egypt. Having undertaken a great responsibility in regard to that country, our partner, France, having declined to undertake such responsibility, were we to shrink from our duties and to be taunted with having insulted France because we had fulfilled those duties? Whose fault was it that France was not by our side? We invited France to join us in maintaining the Khedive on the Throne, on which we had assisted to place him and undertaken to protect him. The French Government were willing to go with us, but they failed to secure a majority in Parliament, and surely it was no insult to France that England went forward to do its duty alone. It did not lie in the mouths of a small minority in the House to say that the Government had acted contrary to the wishes of the people of this country when successive Governments had been maintained by the majority of the House and the voice of the people out-of-doors in fulfilling their engagements. We were still occupying Egypt, though the Government did not desire that the occupation should be prolonged; but he was sure the people of this country approved of the Government fulfilling the obligations they had entered into, and continuing to do their duty by the interests of this country, which we should never forget, and which were largely concerned in our mission to Egypt.

Mr. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.) said, the hon. Mover and Seconder of the Motion had made interesting speeches and raised a great variety of interesting and important questions, although he could not help regretting that among those questions they should have thought it necessary to renew an old charge against the Chancellor of the Exchequer which they would have been better advised to have let alone. But they had also had a long speech from the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Sir James Fergusson), which he must be allowed to characterize as very inadequate compared to the charges brought against the Government. It did not dispose of some of the most serious charges made, and gave no indication of the policy of the Government. As, however, the Government had now promised that they would give the first night after the Mines Regulation Bill for the discussion of the Diplomatic and Consular Vote, and as that Vote would bring up the whole question of our present policy in Egypt, together with the negotiations of Sir H. Drummond Wolff, he thought it better—and others on the same side thought with him—to reserve criticism upon the conduct of the Government, as well as upon the very inadequate reply of the right hon. Gentleman on that occasion.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness) said, he thought the hon. Gentleman the Member for Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce) would, perhaps, discover that it would have been better for him to have seized the present opportunity. He did not see that we had done anything to make the Egyptians bear their burdens more easily. We had rather increased those burdens. He next referred to the despatches of Sir H. Drummond Wolff dated June 14 and 18, in which it was stated that the condition of Egypt was so bad as to cause discontent and to render the fellaheen anxious to join any popular leader who would promise them relief. In these despatches more damning accusations were made against the Government than any that had been made by the Opposition. But the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs had tried to make them believe that, after all the money that had been spent by Sir H. Drummond Wolff in getting this information, he had misled them regarding the facts of the case. The House was told that our object in remaining in Egypt was to secure the Suez Canal for all nations. The Government might as well tell them that their object in remaining in Egypt was to secure that the sun should rise to-morrow morning. Everything that could be done to secure the Canal for all nations had already been done, and the only Power that had done anything to weaken the effect of the declarations and firmans that had been obtained was Great Britain. During the Franco-German War and the Russo-Turkish War each of those Powers respected the neutrality of the Canal; but during the Egyptian Expedition Great Britain broke the International Law.

Mr. W. H. SMITH asked, whether the speech of the hon. Member had any reference to the particular Question before the House? What had the Franco-German War to do with Egypt?

Dr. CLARK said, he was pointing out that neutrality of the Suez Canal had been secured long ago. He wanted to ask the Government for what reason we were going to remain in Egypt now? It seemed to him, judging from the words of Lord Salisbury in his Mansion House speech, and from other declarations, that the Government were trying to repudiate the self-denying ordinance on which we had occupied Egypt, and was preparing the way to make the occupation permanent. If the Government did not leave Egypt now, when it was free alike from external and internal troubles, and the Soudan was quiet, they would never leave it at all, and they would remain there under false pretences.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL said, he was free to confess that if we were at liberty to establish a protectorate over Egypt, and it was expedient to do so, he would not have a word to say against the Convention. He thought it was a very good Convention, and was probably the best and cheapest way of establishing a protectorate. But it was impossible, owing to our obligations, to establish a protectorate in Egypt. He was lost in amazement, however, that the Government should expect the French Government to accept a Convention which was opposed to all their interests and our declarations. The result of the Convention had been that we had been snubbed by France in the most humiliating way. He found that the only result of this snub was that the Prime Minister met it by emphasizing the declaration that we remained in Egypt until we could retire after having established the security of the country. He believed the Government were remaining in Egypt until conditions were fulfilled which he believed to be impossible of fulfilment. That appeared to him a most dangerous position, and one likely to lead to serious complications with France. Moreover, he really did not see that the Government were trying honestly to bring about the conclusion of the present state of things. We were reducing the Egyptian Army to a point at which it could not defend the country, and in order to satisfy the bondholders. Apart from the question of the Army, there were two ways of dealing with the question—either to establish a strong man in the country or to establish something in the nature of Constitutional government. The direction in which we could get out of that Egyptian imbroglio lay in restoring that true understanding and *entente cordiale* with France, which had been so rudely and unfortunately interrupted by our policy in Egypt. He regretted, but was hardly surprised, that the French should try to play on a small scale in the New Hebrides the same game as we were playing in Egypt, saying that they went there to establish order and a Millennium, and would stay there until their work was accomplished. The French people, however, were unwilling to support their Government in foreign adventures which might lead to war; and he thought that if France was now approached in a friendly spirit, both sides agreeing to let bygones be bygones, an arrangement might be come to with her by which a real autonomous Government would be established in Egypt, with great advantage both to that country itself and to Europe.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square) said, he thought he would be expected to say a word or two in reply to the observations of the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere), although he had so often answered similar charges—he believed to the satisfaction of the House—that it was scarcely necessary for him to answer the personal attack which formed, if not the staple, at least the point of the hon. Gentleman's speech. The hon. Member had begun by making some suggestion as if upon one of the loans issued by the firm in which he (Mr. Goschen) was interested 24 years ago, that firm had made 11 per cent profit. Well, the most fabulous figures had often been put forward in many quarters as to the profits made on those Egyptian loans, and he confessed that he had not thought it necessary to refute such exaggerated and absurd statements. But in order, once for all, to induce even the hon. Member to refrain from repeating them—for he presumed that the hon. Member would accept his word—he might state that the aggregate earnings on the loan upon which the hon. Member said 11 per cent had gone into the pockets of the firm were not more than 1½ per cent. He confessed that it went against his inclination to say that much, but he had seen that at elections and on various platforms the most fabulous figures had been imported into the allegations put forward on that subject, and therefore he had now rather reluctantly made this statement.

MR. LABOUCHERE: I presume that the right hon. Gentleman would wish this matter to be fully elucidated. Perhaps he will be good enough to state whether he denies the amount of the loan as given by Mr. Cave and the amount received by the Egyptian Government; and whether he denies my statement as to the amount that ought to have been received on the issue price; and whether he will state to whom the difference of something like £400,000 or £500,000 went. His firm is responsible for that.

MR. GOSCHEN: Our firm were the agents. The agents are not responsible at all.

MR. LABOUCHERE: To whom did the difference go?

MR. GOSCHEN said, the sums his firm received were paid over to the contractors of the loan, and it was not until 15 years afterwards that he heard the allegation that the sum mentioned by the hon. Member had been entered in the books of the Egyptian Treasury. He might, perhaps, be able to throw some light upon the matter. In 1876, when the accounts of the Egyptian Treasury were examined, it was found that the Egyptian Finance Minister—the Minister to whom the hon. Gentleman afterwards alluded as if he was one of the saviours of Egypt—had been deliberately cooking the Egyptian accounts, and that he had deducted some 10 per cent or more from the amounts paid over to the Egyptian Government. It had never been said before that the agents were responsible; but it was now alleged, and the hon. Member seemed to allege, that the money went into the pockets of the firm with which he (Mr. Goschen) was connected.

MR. LABOUCHERE: Let me ask the right hon. Gentleman one question. Was the loan underwritten or not?

MR. GOSCHEN: As far as I can remember the loan was underwritten.

MR. LABOUCHERE: Then what were the terms?

MR. GOSCHEN: How can I say now?

MR. LABOUCHERE: Ah!

MR. GOSCHEN: What does the hon. Member mean by that interruption, which I consider is almost an insolent interruption?

MR. LABOUCHERE: Mr. Speaker, I rise to Order. I wish to ask you, Sir, whether one Member has a right to say of another that his interruption is insolent?

MR. SPEAKER: I hope the right hon. Gentleman will withdraw the word insolent, which is not a Parliamentary expression.

MR. GOSCHEN said, he would withdraw the word; but he confessed it was used under considerable provocation. Did the hon. Member expect that he (Mr. Goschen) should lay before him that of which he was absolutely ignorant himself? He had told the hon. Member that the money was paid over by the firm with which he was connected, and he was absolutely unable to give him further information, nor did he believe that anybody not acquainted with the Egyptian Government at the time—in 1865—would be able to give it. He called the attention of the House to the spirit in which, after he had condescended to give the hon. Member what information he could, the hon. Member attempted to cross-examine him. The hon. Member for Northampton had stated that he had gone to Egypt in order to rivet the fetters of the bondholders. The hon. Member, like many others, had utterly ignored what passed a few months before that Mission to Egypt. The French had made an arrangement with the Khedive by which they put him and the whole of his finances under the most stringent French control. Having done so they re-arranged all the loans with every possible injustice to the separate classes of bondholders, and it was in consequence of that proceeding that the English bondholders thought themselves injured. As to the protest which had been referred to, it was the recognized duty of firms who brought out loans to protest against any injustice inflicted on the holders of such loans; but the special point in this case was that securities which had been promised to one set of bondholders had been diverted to others, who were mainly the French, and it was to rectify this injustice as between different bodies of bondholders that the protest of his firm was made. It was urged that one of the chief results of his mission was that foreign control was introduced into the finances of Egypt; but this international control was established several months before he went to Egypt; and it was established in the form of the Caisse de la Dette, upon which there was a Frenchman and two others, but no Englishman. This Board had the power given to it to summon the Minister of Finance or any of the Government officials before the international tribunals. He wished to direct attention to the fact that this form of control existed before English intervention, and that it had been forced by another Power on the Egyptian Government, and it was not to any British influence that the beginning of that system was to be traced. Again, the hon. Member made a great deal out of the Moukabala, and he intimated that it was continued in order to pay some loans in which his own (Mr. Goschen's) firm was concerned. He did not know whether that was insinuated.

Mr. LABOUCHERE said, that what he intended to state, and not to insinuate, was that the decree against which a protest had been made had been rendered necessary by the Khedive in his decree abrogating the Moukabala.

Mr. GOSCHEN said, of course that was not so. It had absolutely nothing to do with the Moukalaba. That was a specimen of the argument of the hon. Gentleman. He agreed that the Moukabala was a thoroughly bad tax; but when the Khedive abolished it, its abolition was considered by all the parties concerned a breach of faith, inasmuch as it deprived those who had redeemed half the tax of the ultimate benefit to be derived from their payments. The landholders protested against its abolition, and he thought that they were right in their protest. The tax was bad and ruinous; but the way in which it had been suspended was unjust. He had been frequently charged both with reinstating the Moukabala and with abolishing it. He had explained how it came to be reinstated in 1876, and he had absolutely nothing whatever to do with its abolition in 1880. He had nothing to do with the decision which the Commission of Liquidation arrived at. It became an international matter, and he had no concern with it. Then the hon. Member had gone on and alluded to the case of the Mufettish, who protested against his (Mr. Goschen's) mission. Well, it had been shown that the Mufettish was robbing the Egyptian Treasury. That became perfectly clear, and on his death it was shown that he had enriched himsel. enormously at the expense of Egypt. It had been stated that the revenue which he pressed out of the Egyptians was as much as £12,000,000 or £14,000,000 a-year. He was the man who had ruined Egyptian finance, and though the circumstances of his disappearance were most discreditable, he had done his country the greatest possible harm. It was not because he protested against the Moukabala, but because he was discovered in his robberies, that he was disgraced. His right hon. Friend the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs had said that there had been an improvement in Egypt. It was absolutely certain that through the control which had been exercised from without the burdens of Egypt had been absolutely and greatly decreased.

It was one of the points established when he was in Egypt that there should be State protection against the irregular mode of taxation which had been in progress for many years. With regard to the allegation that the bondholders always took their pound of flesh, his right hon. Friend had already shown that the burdens had been reduced. [Mr. LABOUCHERE: Not enough.] He war glad of that interruption for it reminded him of a point he ought to make. In whose power was it to make these reductions? Was it in the power of the English Government? The reduction made at the time of his (Mr. Goschen's) mission to Egypt was the result of voluntary arrangement between the creditors and the Government of Egypt. Twenty per cent was struck off the capital of a great portion of the debt, and the amount of interest was reduced from 7 per cent to 6 per cent, and in some cases to 5 per cent, in addition to the reduction of capital. That was no slight modification to make with voluntary powers. Then the hon. Gentleman said the Egyptian Government might repudiate the loans on the Daïra and Domain lands. That was a sample of the loose way in which hon. Members studied the complicated question of Egyptian finance. The reason given was that these loans were based on private property. The Daïra was private property since it belonged to the Khedive, but the Domains were lands handed over by the Khedive to assist the liquidation of the Egyptian debt. The Khedive gave the Domains to the creditors for the relief of the general financial situation, and on these estates a loan of £9,000,000 was raised to relieve Egyptian finance. Every shilling of that loan went to the satisfaction of the general debts of Egypt. If the hon. Gentleman's statement had gone uncontradicted, it would have appeared that the Egyptian people were being swindled, because they had to pay the deficit or difference between the produce of the Domains and the interest of the Domains loan. But as a matter of fact that was not so, because every penny of the Domains loan had been devoted to public purposes. There was a large floating debt of some £4,000,000 or £5,000,000 and growing deficits, and, in order to meet these, the Khedive was asked to give up his estates for the relief of the general situation. He thought he had now dealt with the personal charges of the hon. Member for Northampton. He would leave other points to the larger discussion with regard to the Convention which would take place on another occasion. But he would endeavour to elucidate the point to which the hon. Member for East Mayo referred with regard to the £450,000 which he said ought to have been devoted to the relief of the land tax as promised by Lord Northbrook. In carrying out the arrangement proposed by Lord Northbrook there was a Council held, at which it was discussed whether the gift of £450,000 was to be bestowed in the form of relief from forced labour or in the form of remitted taxation. That Council came to the conclusion that the fellaheen would be more benefited by relief from forced labour and by being left in their homes during the large number of days they would otherwise spend in that way. The Egyptian Ministers had as much to do with this arrangement as any of their British advisers. Some hon. Members spoke and argued as if all these matters lay in the hands of the British Government, and as if that Government had only to say—"We will reduce the interest on the debt," and it would be done. In the Conference on that subject two years ago, the Representatives of the British Government did their best to advocate a permanent instead of a temporary reduction of 5 per cent in the interest on the debt; but they were in a minority; they had to deal with the Representatives of a number of European Powers. That was the situation now, and it had been so from the beginning. Foreign Powers had a *locus standi* in Egypt such as they had in no other country. They had mixed tribunals on which were Judges representing foreign countries; and these mixed tribunals had what they had nowhere else—the power of summoning Ministers before them, and of preventing the issue of decrees which would appear to involve a breach of faith with foreign creditors. When he was in Egypt a Minister of Finance had actually been summoned before a mixed tribunal, because he had failed to meet an engagement of that kind. Every successive British Government had always been more anxious to deal with the debt in the way of reduction and liquidation than were the Representatives of any of the other Powers. As to the allegation that the recent surplus had been a bogus surplus, that could hardly be. It was not only the financial adviser of the Khedive who examined the figures, but there was also the Caisse de la Dette, in which several Powers were represented, and that Board went into the minutest details in order to ascertain whether there was a surplus. If there was a bias on the part of that Board it would rather be to think that there was no surplus. The accounts were examined from every point of view; they were passed item by item; and it was only by such a scrutiny that the existence of an equitable and a substantial surplus was ascertained. He appreciated the desire to have Egyptian finance discussed every year. The Government had a responsibility which was most unsatisfactory; everyone agreed that it was eminently unsatisfactory; and the difficulty was how to escape from those cords with which all the European Powers were tied together. He affirmed that the interest had been fairly met, and that the surplus had been a sufficient and a real one. An International Commission would not, as supposed, reduce the interest; on the contrary, its tendency would be precisely the opposite. The only Government anxious to reduce the interest on the Egyptian debt was the English Government; in a Commission every other Power would attempt to prove that Egypt was not overtaxed, and that the administration had more money than it was entitled to; and the other Powers would sooner suspend public works and put off reforms than allow one tittle to be struck off the debt. If it should ever come to an International Commission, he said it in the face of foreign countries as well as the face of the House of Commons, such a Commission would not adopt the same clement attitude in regard to the collection of taxes that would be taken by the Government of this country to whatever Party it belonged. With Sir H. Drummond Wolff, he believed it would be to the advantage of Egypt that there should be a reduction in the rate of interest upon the debt. It was to be desired on many grounds. But we had to act with Foreign Powers; we could not by our own action lighten the charge that was placed on Egypt. They knew the interest taken by many Foreign Governments in the bondholders, and the lengths they were prepared to go on their behalf. The fall of Ismail Pasha was not primarily due to England, but to the non-payment of German creditors; his deposition emanated from Germany, and not from this country. The Government were perfectly alive to the unsatisfactory condition of the finances of Egypt, in so far as taxation was concerned; they were alive to many of the difficulties which had been pointed out; they would do their best to seek a solution; and if the time came they would use their influence to bring about an equitable settlement. But it was impossible for this country simply by a stroke of the pen or a Resolution of the House of Commons to take any step in that direction without having first secured the assent of the other Powers of Europe.

Mr. LABOUCHERE said, he knew the Government were anxious to get into Committee of Supply, and he would ask leave to withdraw the Motion.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

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SUPPLY—CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES.

Supply—*considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Class III.—Law and Justice.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum, not exceeding £53,681, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st of March 1888, for the Salaries of the Law Officers; the Salaries and Expenses of the Department of the Solicitor for the Affairs of Her Majesty's Treasury, and of the Department of the Queen's Proctor for Divorce Interventions, and of the Department of the Director of Public Prosecutions; the Costs of Prosecutions, including those relating to the Coin, and to Bankruptcy, and of other Legal Proceedings conducted by those Departments; and various other Legal Expenses, including Statute Law Revision, and Parliamentary Agency."

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I think it will be convenient, in the few remarks with which I shall have to trouble the Committee on this Vote, that I should confine myself to the salary which the country pays to the Attorney General, because if we can reduce the salary of that officer it is quite clear that a reduction of the salary of the Solicitor General will follow. I hope my hon.

and learned Friend the Attorney General will understand that, in moving this reduction of his salary, I desire to keep clear altogether of any personal questions. I admit that it is somewhat invidious to have to move the reduction of a personal Vote, but that is the only way in which this question can be raised, and I feel sure the Committee will understand that in doing so I make no complaint against the present holder of the Office of Attorney General. I am sure we all recognize the great ability with which both the Attorney General and Solicitor General carry out their duties in this House. We have to consider the general question whether we are paying our Law Officers too high salaries. If we can reduce the present Vote, although unquestionably none of us would wish the reduction to apply to the present Law Officers of the Crown, we do desire that it should apply to future appointments; and, perhaps, it will not be long before there is another appointment to this Office, because the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) has stated that he intends to join the Government in the course of the autumn, and that would probably result in a change. I do not believe the country fully realizes the amount which we pay to the Law Officers of the Crown. On page 198 it appears that we pay the Attorney General for non-contentious business £7,000, and the Solicitor General £6,000 a-year; in addition to that we pay them for what work they do outside their chambers on the average £3,000 to the Attorney General and £2,000 to the Solicitor General, so that the aggregate of our payments to these two Officers is no less than £10,000 for the Attorney General and £8,000 for the Solicitor General. Now, I have no quarrel with the amount which we pay to the Attorney General for what is called contentious business. I see from the Report of the Departmental Committee of 1877 that contentious business is defined to mean briefs in actions or other proceedings, civil or criminal, and consultations upon those briefs, as well as other business of that sort. Those consultations, I understand, we pay for at the market value, and accordingly we get good value for the money which we pay; but when it comes to paying £7,000 a-year for what is called non-contentious business, then I think we ought to reduce that sum to a more reasonable amount. The Secretary to the Treasury informed us that the opinion of the Attorney General and the Solicitor General was taken in 385 non-contentious cases in 1884; in 405 non-contentious cases in 1885, and 360 non-contentious cases in 1886, and, in addition to those, there were certain other consultations in connection with patents. But I notice that evidence was given before the Committee of 1887 that the amount of work required in connection with the Patent Office is very small indeed, and consists mainly in the Law Officers signing their names from time to time, it being seldom that any legal questions arise in connection with their duties as Law Officers of the Crown. Therefore, for the assistance given to the Government we pay a total sum of £13,000 a-year to the Attorney General and Solicitor General. Nor is that all. Probably the Committee is not aware that we do not by this large payment obtain the whole of the time and full services of the Attorney General and the Solicitor General; they are allowed to take as much private practice as time permits them, and I believe that in every case the private business is considerable. Of course, we all know they receive the honour of Knighthood; but that I will throw in. Then, again, the Attorney General is almost certain of obtaining the post of Lord Chancellor, and at any moment, if he wishes, he can always have a Judgeship. Therefore, we must take these matters into account as a decided advantage, which ought to be calculated at a considerable sum. I ask whether the Government can give any reason why we should pay the Attorney General twice the amount which we pay to the Prime Minister? I am sure that the Attorney General, being a very modest man, would not say that he is equal to two Prime Ministers; but if we estimate it in money, the amount he receives is double that which we pay to the Prime Minister or any Secretary of State. There is, as far as I can judge, only one reason advanced for paying our Law Officers such very high salaries—namely, that if we reduce the amount we should not get the best men, but have to put up with inferior lawyers. I do not myself believe that this could be so, because, even on the proposal I am going to make, the Attorney General would still receive £8,000 a-year, in addition to the advantages I have referred to. But I do not believe that the Attorney Generalship is looked at from a money point of view. I believe it is looked upon as a great honour—as the blue ribbon of the Bar—and, therefore, I cannot believe that anyone will seriously argue that the Attorney Generalship, with the honour which attaches to that position, and the work with which it is connected, would be refused by the best men at the Bar. We shall be told, probably, that we have made a bargain with our Law Officers under the arrangement of 1871, when the fees were commuted, and that it would not be fair to alter that arrangement. I ask whether that bargain was made with the occupants of the Office, or with the Bar as a whole? If it refers to present occupants, I cannot admit that the Law Officers of the Crown have any vested right in the Office, or any right to say that the salaries shall not be reduced, more especially as their Successors would probably be gentlemen opposed to them in political opinions. I cannot see, either, that we have made any bargain with the Bar that these salaries should not be reduced if the country so wishes. I think everyone will admit that the House of Commons may abolish either of these Offices; and surely, if they are entitled to abolish them, how much more are they entitled to reduce the salaries? Mr. Robert Lowe, in 1871, by a mere stroke of the pen, reduced the salary of the Attorney General, for non-contentious business, from £11,000 to £7,000, and that of the Solicitor General by about £3,000 or £4,000. If that could be done by Mr. Robert Lowe, surely, if the House of Commons desires, they can go still further in the same direction. I hope the Attorney General, if he endeavours to convince the Committee that these high salaries ought to be paid, will have better arguments to use than that the best men at the Bar will not accept £8,000 a-year, with other emoluments, and the honour attached to the Office, and that we have made a bargain which we cannot break. We have reduced this Vote before, and I cannot see any reason why we should not try to reduce it further. I think the proposal which I make is a moderate one; it is to reduce the fixed salary of the Attorney General to the amount we pay to Secretaries of State; and I trust it will be accepted by the Committee. I place it at that amount, not because I think it ought not to be further reduced, but because it seems to me a good line to take that we should not pay the Attorney General a higher salary for non-contentious business than we pay to the highest officers of State.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That Item A, Salaries, be reduced by the sum of £4,000, viz., in respect of the Salaries of the Attorney General and the Solicitor General."—(*Mr. Sydney Buxton.*)

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER) (Isle of Wight): I am quite sure that no one will suppose it is from any personal motives that the hon. Gentleman opposite has moved the reduction of this Vote. The hon. Member is good enough to say that this reduction shall not apply to the present Law Officers, and I may state that both the Solicitor General and I approach this question quite apart from all personal considerations. The hon. Member has expressed the opinion that the salary of each of the Law Officers should be reduced to the level of that of the Prime Minister or of a principal Secretary of State. If the circumstances of the appointment of the Prime Minister or a Secretary of State were identical or parallel with those of the appointments of the Law Officers of the Crown I should agree entirely with his observations. I should like to say here, however, that I by no means think that the Prime Minister is paid a sufficient sum. It is not for the reason of enhancing the services of the Law Officers that I say that; it is because I think we do not proceed on a proper scale, and I hope some day or other that the country will be rich enough and liberal enough to pay the Prime Minister and the Secretaries of State larger salaries. But the circumstances under which the Prime Minister and the Secretaries of State are appointed differ in most essential particulars from the circumstances under which the appointments of Attorney General and Solicitor General are made. I am not at all suggesting that some time or other it would not be desirable that the mode of payment to the Law Officers should be considered; but I must not by that observation be understood to mean that I think there can be any substantial saving to the country, because the position which the Law Officers occupy is a very peculiar one. In the first place, the Law Officers have no public clerks, no staff, no office or public department, and no records on which they can fall back. I think it is a great defect in the department of the Law Officers that there is no permanent staff, and if it were not for the good feeling which prevails between the successive holders of the Office, it would be utterly impossible for the duties of the Attorney General and Solicitor General to be satisfactorily performed. I can say for myself that when I, for the first time, came into the Office which I have now the honour of holding, if it had not been for the kindness and consideration of my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Bury (Sir Henry James), I must have spent two or three months before I could have even understood the business entrusted to me. The Committee will remember that when a Minister of State succeeds to his Office he finds his Department, with all its machinery, staff of clerks, and private secretaries to his hand. Do not let it be supposed that I consider the machinery and staff at the disposal of the Minister of State too great; I only wish to point out that he steps into a ready made place, and has to do the work of his Department under the circumstances I have described. But the Law Officer, when he succeeds to his Office, as I have said, has no staff and no established records, and he has to rely for what he wants on the good feeling of his Predecessor. It follows from that that an Attorney General must in connection with his public business at once, not only pay his own clerks, but also gentlemen to do work similar to that performed by private secretaries in public offices, and I suppose there has never been a Law Officer who has properly done his work who has not paid a very considerable sum for clerks to assist in the mechanical work, and also to gentlemen who can assist him in the performance of public business. Therefore, when the hon. Member suggests that the Attorney General receives £7,000 a-year apart from contentious business, I can assure him that very considerable reductions have to be made for work to be done. I hope that some day, without the necessity of increasing the charge to the nation, the matter may be so adjusted that, while the nation obtains in a certain sense better value for its money, there may be a permanent staff ready to be handed over to the Law Officers. There was the same defect that I have alluded to in connection with the Office of the Lord Chancellor; but a change was made not long ago in the direction I have indicated, which has worked a great improvement. It must, therefore, be borne in mind that from this £7,000 a-year there is to be made a reduction of many hundreds of pounds, depending, of course, on the way in which the Attorney General or Solicitor General pays for the assistance that is absolutely necessary. In 1875 a Departmental Committee was appointed to consider this subject. On that Committee sat the late Master of the Rolls, Sir George Jessel, and other eminent men. They examined Sir Richard Baggallay, Sir John Karslake, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt), and one or two others; and the point that was discussed before the Committee in no way arose with respect to any suggestion that there was over-payment, but in consequence of some friction which had arisen from the way in which the fees of the Law Officers had been paid. I do not know whether I am correct in that or not; but if hon. Members will refer they will find that the Report proceeded on the basis that the salary of the Law Officers was not an exceptional salary, and when the whole of the circumstances are considered I think that no one will come to the conclusion that it is excessive. The hon. Member says that the business of the Law Officers in connection with the Patent Office consists in only signing their names, and that there is no strain put upon them in this respect. The hon. Member in saying this is probably confusing the old practice with what is done at the present time. That was the case in the old days, when the Attorney General signed the odd numbers of patents, and the Solicitor General the even numbers; but it is very different now.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: The evidence given by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir

William Harcourt) was that, as a rule, all that the Law Officers had to do was to sign their names.

Sir RICHARD WEBSTER: The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby was, for once in his life, not quite accurate, and he was certainly confusing the old mode with the work that has now to be done. That work consists of the Law Officers sitting two or three or a greater number of hours on some 30 days in the year, and hearing cases with reference to appeals. I do not say the work is of a very difficult character, but it is very important and highly responsible work. The hon. Member is, no doubt, aware that a discussion took place in 1871 with reference to the emoluments of the Law Officers on the Motion of the late Mr. Fawcett, and that it was renewed on a subsequent occasion. I do not suppose anyone will deny that it is to the advantage of the State that these Offices should be filled by persons who are willing to make sacrifices for the honour of the Office which I fully recognize. It must not be supposed that these sacrifices are not made; and when I say this I am not speaking of my own case alone, for I am sure the same thing can be said of the hon. and learned Member for Hackney (Sir Charles Russell), and the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Bury (Sir Henry James). Lawyers cannot accept the Offices without running serious risks with regard to their own private business. When this point was put to Sir John Karslake by the Committee, he said it would be a great misfortune if the Attorney General and the Solicitor General were not at the head of their profession; that it was most important that those who advised the Government and the House of Commons should be in touch with the general practice going on, and that they should be able to keep up their experience with the current legal practice, and not be merely guided by their former experience. If this Office is to be properly filled it must be by men who are willing to make considerable sacrifices. We know, as a rule, Law officers are not independent men, as Prime Ministers frequently are, but men who look to going back to their profession at a later day, and the consequence is that the State ought to make the position so remunerative that it should always command men who are fitted for the post. But I say again that my reason for resisting this Amendment is that I do not believe, having regard to the work to be done, and having regard to the fact that the State does not supply a staff of clerks or any other assistance, that the salary is too high. I have listened to the speech of the hon. Member in support of this Motion to reduce the Vote; and although I do not in any way complain of what he has said, I do not think he has made out any case except on the point of comparison with the salaries of the Prime Minister and the principal Secretaries. I have pointed out that the sacrifices to be made by those who accept this Office are not inconsiderable; and I hope and believe that, as long as the duties shall be performed by those who hold the Office in future as well as they have been performed in the past, the country will be satisfied with the return it receives for the remuneration of its Law Officers, and unless something is done to relieve the Law Officers of the heavy charges on them for conducting their business, I think the House of Commons ought to be of opinion that the salaries are not too high.

Mr. P. STANHOPE (Wednesbury): Inasmuch as this is the sole occasion we shall have of raising this question, which is only an item in the greater subject of the general law costs of the State, I wish to make some observations in support of the Amendment of my hon. Friend the Member for the Tower Hamlets (Mr. Sydney Buxton). The Attorney General has given us a most judicious defence of this Office in the abstract, and I entirely acquit him of any personal feeling in resisting the Amendment for the reduction of the Vote. There was one statement of the hon. and learned Gentleman which struck me as being peculiar. My hon. Friend pointed out that the salary of the Attorney General was double that of the Prime Minister, and he replied that that was no doubt the case, at the same time giving it as his opinion that the salaries of the Prime Minister and the principal officers of State should be raised in amount to that of the salary of the Attorney General. In these democratic days I think the suggestion of the hon. and learned Gentleman is hardly likely to commend itself to this House, and certainly not to the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill).

The hon. and learned Gentleman proceeded to show us that the salary and fees in his case did not represent absolutely the profit of the holders of the Office; that he had to pay a large clerical staff, and that he had also to obtain the assistance of properly qualified gentlemen, who, I believe, are popularly known as devils, and are extremely expensive. No doubt, that does, to a certain extent, diminish the value of the Office of Attorney General; but, in saying that, the hon. and learned Gentleman seems to miss the point of our attack. The hon. and learned Gentleman also argues that there is no permanent Office connected with the appointment. But I would remind the Committee that the eminent lawyer who occupies in France the position of Attorney General receives £1,200 a-year; and, again, that in America you have the Attorney General, a gentleman of high qualifications and learned in the same English law, receiving $10,000 or £2,000 a-year. I ought to add that the Senate of the United States, in the exercise of its discretion, reduced this sum to $8,000, and I am not aware that the gentleman now occupying the position of Attorney General of the United States is in any way inferior to his predecessors. I can only say that we on these Benches, and other Members who are interested in the question, will feel it our duty to attack this and other exaggerated legal charges whenever the opportunity presents itself. We contend that the system is bad, that the legal expenditure of the Government is enormous, and that the particular case of the Attorney General is merely characteristic of the whole. The hon. and learned Gentleman speaks of the market value of the best legal talent; but I venture to say that the exaggerated salaries which we pay to the Attorney General and Solicitor General are the cause of the high market value of those legal talents. We go, as an opulent Government, into the market, and our system is such that legal fees throughout the country are enormously increased. Any gentleman who has had a lawsuit will know that, having consulted his solicitor, the first thing is that the latter says that your opponent has retained the Attorney General. You shudder and feel that your last day is come, and then you are told that you must send a retainer to the ex-Attorney General, who is the only man able to cope with the Attorney General in Court. I say that this ridiculous competition has the effect of raising fees throughout the country, and that a great benefit would be felt on all hands if the Attorney General and Solicitor General were paid less money and were reduced in market value. The hon. and learned Gentleman laid great stress on the evidence taken before the Committee he has referred to; but I would point out that the constitution of that Committee was almost entirely legal. He quoted particularly the opinion of a very eminent man, of whom I desire to speak with great respect; but Sir John Karslake was a lawyer, and, unquestionably, we shall always hear from eminent lawyers the opinion that lawyers are not paid enough. I hope, at all events, although my hon. Friend and myself may not carry the Committee entirely with us, that the Amendment will be pressed to a Division, and that the result of the discussion will be to call public attention to these exaggerated charges, so that, in course of time, this Vote may be placed on a more moderate footing.

MR. MOLLOY (King's Co., Birr): As a member of the Bar, I rise to support the Motion of the hon. Member for Poplar (Mr. Sydney Buxton). It is three years ago that I made myself a similar Motion, and drew attention to the excessive fees paid to members of the Legal Profession in this House. There is a mystery about the legal element here, which consists of those who have official positions, and those who hope to get them; those who have them support the present payment, and those who have them not, support it because they hope some day or other to get it themselves. The hon. and learned Gentleman has said that the Attorney General has to go back to his Profession. I will tell the Committee what the position of an Attorney General is when he has to do that. In the first place, the Law Officers are selected because they are Members of this House, and because of their position at the Bar; naturally those whose positions are not good would not be chosen; the selection is made of men in the highest position. Now, what is the result on the practice of a barrister on becoming Attorney General or Solicitor General. The only result, as far as I can see, is that their clients have to pay double fees; and when once lawyers have doubled their fees they never reduce them. But, supposing that they go back to their Profession, their position at the Bar is not in the least degree injured. Surely the position of a man at the Bar is improved by the fact that he has been selected by the Government for the position of Attorney General or Solicitor General; so much therefore for the argument that the private practice of a lawyer is injured by holding either of these Offices. The hon. and learned Gentleman speaks of the sacrifice that men in his position have to make. What is the position of the Attorney General and Solicitor General? Why, they become the glory of the whole Profession, and all we who are juniors, and are running about to get bread and cheese, follow them, flatter them, and do all we can to obtain some little appointment—crumbs from the rich man's table in the shape of a prosecution or something of the sort. The position, I say, is one of glory as well as wealth. The Attorney General bids us look on the burdens he has to carry, and he says—"We have to give opinions during the Session and during vacation;" but I ask would not many barristers be only too glad to give opinions every day. I know that I would be glad to do so; but at the present moment I do not give more than one in three months, and then I am sorry to say that sometimes I do not get paid for it. And here again the position of an Attorney General is superior because he has clients who do not fail—they are men who pay—so that the argument of the hon. and learned Gentleman as to the burdens on the Office is one that falls to the ground. Then, again, the Attorney General looks to the Lord Chancellorship, and in nine cases out of ten gets it. It is the same with regard to the Irish Office; almost all the Attorney Generals and Solicitor Generals for Ireland who come into this House support the policy of their Party, and their whole aim is the Judicial Bench, where they are always to be found after they cease to be Members of this House. Now, on the ground that no barrister is injured in his Profession by accepting the high and dignified position of Attorney General or Solicitor General, and looking to the fact that it only tends to double his fees, I think that any appeal to us to support the enormous payment now made to the Law Officers is one that should not receive the assent of the Committee. When it is remembered that the work of the Prime Minister is paid for at the rate of about £5,000 a-year, and that he has not only to give an opinion once every day, but that the whole of the responsibility of the Government rests upon his shoulders I think we are entitled to say that this Vote ought to be reduced.

Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): If I understand my hon. Friend aright, he objects to the present remuneration of the Law Officers on two grounds—first, that the holders of the Office make no sacrifice; and, secondly, that they enjoy the advantage of getting double fees. I had not the pleasure of hearing the Attorney General's reply to the hon. Member for Poplar; but I am quite sure he did not put it to the Committee that barristers were placed at any disadvantage by accepting the position of Law Officer. I am surprised, however, at the statement of the hon. and learned Member for King's County (Mr. Molloy), that the Law Officers of the Crown receive double fees. It is certainly the first time I have ever heard that said.

Mr. MOLLOY: I can give a case exactly in point of a barrister who, on acceptance of the Office, gave notice that he could not accept the old fees.

Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER: My hon. Friend seems to think there is some kind of compulsion in the payment of fees; but payment for the services of the Attorney General in no way differs from the purchase of other marketable commodities. I remind my hon. Friend in a very homely phrase that you cannot buy champagne at the price of small beer. I have no doubt there are numbers of gentlemen who would undertake the responsible post of Law Officer to the Crown for a much smaller consideration; but the country has to go into the legal market and buy the best article that can be obtained at the market price. Therefore, if there is a case to be made out by those who oppose this Vote, it must be shown that the Law Officers are receiving higher remuneration from the State than they would get in private practice. I am not going to tell secrets; but I happen to know something of the fees of some of those who have filled the position in question, and I can assure the hon. Member that it is not a rare thing for leading barristers in this country to make £10,000 a-year in fees. As long as there are people capable of paying high fees, I think you cannot be surprised if the Government of the day has to pay a correspondingly high price for its legal requirements. But to bring the discussion to a practical point. I very much doubt whether, when the State makes these payments to its Law Officer, it has not the right to require that he should devote the whole of his time to the work of the Office. The work of the Attorney General is increasing year by year and becoming more important. The rule now is one of constant attendance in this House. The Attorney General and Solicitor General are now compelled to be here during every debate; there is hardly a debate in the course of which some question does not arise on which the Government require to be guided by the Law Officers of the Crown; and I throw out the suggestion that the time has now arrived to consider whether the whole time of the Attorney General and Solicitor General should not be devoted to the service of the country. I cannot support the Amendment of the hon. Member for Poplar, because it is not shown that the fees paid to the Law Officers of the Crown are higher than they would receive in private practice.

Question put.

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 57; Noes 155: Majority 98.—(Div. List, No. 271.) [9.55 P.M.]

Original Question again proposed.

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I do not want to move an Amendment, or to interpose for more than a minute before the Vote is taken. All I desire is that the Government should give us a little information upon the figures in reference to the "Solicitor, Queen's Proctor, and Director of Public Prosecutions." It will be seen that there is a Director of Public Prosecutions who, I presume, is the same person as the Queen's Proctor, and that he has a salary of £2,000 a-year. He has three assistant solicitors, one principal assistant, six assistants, and then a number of first-class and second-class clerks—two first-class and nine second-class clerks, besides five supplementary clerks. It appears to me that this staff is very largely in excess of the requirements of the establishment. We had presented to us the other day a Return showing the amount of work in connection with public prosecutions for criminal offences with which the Public Prosecutor has to do, and from my recollection of the figures given in that Return I can say that there is not nearly so much work in the way of prosecutions undertaken by the Public Prosecutor as to necessitate such an enormous staff as we have here. But admitting that all these clerks, and assistants, and solicitors, and so on are required, what I do not understand, from my examination of this Estimate, is why the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Queen's Proctor, who, as I say, I suppose are the same person, should have, in addition to these assistants and clerks, a sum of £700 in one case and £309 in another case, as appears on page 199, as allowances for clerks. The Queen's Proctor has an allowance for two clerks, and the Director of Public Prosecutions has an allowance of £309 for clerks. It appears to me that these charges ought to come under the charges on the previous page; I do not understand why there should be an additional sum set down afterwards in the Estimates for clerks generally. I just mention these points, and I shall be glad if some facts are given us by the Attorney General to prove that the duties of the Public Prosecutor, like those of the Attorney General and the Solicitor General, are so exceedingly onerous that the provision made is not too great; but whether I am satisfied on that point or not, I should like to have an explanation of the additional payments to which I have drawn attention.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I desire also to draw the attention of the Committee to the charge of £1,000 for a solicitor to the Queen's Proctor and the Director of Public Prosecutions in connection with the item of £25,500 a-year under Subhead B on account of criminal prosecutions. Now, Sir, in connection with the expenditure of this money there is a blot upon the criminal procedure of the country which is very little short of scandalous. I mean that in connection with the position of clerks at Petty Sessions in the rural districts of England. According to the Municipal Corporations Act of 1882, Section 159, justices for a borough have to appoint from time to time a fit person to be their clerk, to be removed at their pleasure, but the clerk to the justices shall not by himself or his partner or otherwise be directly or indirectly employed or interested in the prosecutions of any offender committed for trial by those justices, or any of them, at any Court, or gaol delivery, or Quarter Sessions. That is the rule with regard to the boroughs, but in regard to the rural districts no such rule obtains. You have this situation, that in the Petty Sessions throughout the country you find as magistrates' clerk a man who is a solicitor, who is the legal adviser, who is in reality the legal steam tug of the Bench, and who almost invariably sways the Bench in regard to any question of law.

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not see how the hon. Member connects his present observations with this Vote. There is nothing contained in the Vote for clerks to magistrates as far as I can make out.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I think I shall be able to show you, Sir, that my observations are distinctly relevant to the expenditure of £25,500 for criminal prosecutions, &c. The Solicitor and Queen's Proctor is the director of these public prosecutions, and I am speaking of the position of magistrates' clerks in connection with public prosecutions. The point I raise is admitted to be a serious blot upon the administration of justice. What is not allowed in the boroughs is allowed in the country districts, and the clerk to the magistrates, after having caused by his advice the committal of a prisoner, will often be entrusted personally with the prosecution of that prisoner, and the money which is distributed under this Vote goes in part to pay for the services of magistrates' clerks whose duties conflict with their personal interest, and that is where the blot lies. I know that in one case on the Northern Circuit—I do not think it would be difficult to adduce other cases on other Circuits—the clerk to the magistrates, in collusion or by arrangement with the superintendent of police is, I am assured, secured in a considerable amount of business by reason of the committals which take place at the Court where the superintendent of police is allowed to act as prosecuting officer. The superintendent of police acts as advocate in the Court, and the men who are committed by that Bench are prosecuted to the professional benefit of the clerk to the Bench himself. Now when, some little time ago, there was a case of a young girl who was very seriously injured, a private prosecution was instituted; a private solicitor was instructed by the girl to take certain proceedings. The girl herself died, as was suggested, by foul play, and the mother of the girl then instructed the same solicitor to institute a prosecution. The superintendent of the police of the district went down and inquired into the case, and then he and the clerk to the magistrates arranged to secure a public prosecution. Now, in the Act which regulates the duty of the Public Prosecutor—that is to say, the 42 & 43 *Vict.* c. 22, s. 7, it is laid down that nothing in that Act shall interfere with the right of any person to institute, undertake, or carry on any criminal proceeding. In the case to which I have referred the private prosecutor was practically ousted out of the business altogether. A superintendent of police undertook as far as he could the duty of the Public Prosecutor, and the prosecution was in the hands of the clerk to the magistrates. I am assured that the Treasury Solicitor, that is to say, this very man for whom this £1,000 a-year is asked in this Vote, gets a commission on these transactions from the magistrates' clerks who act on agency terms. I want to ask the Attorney General or the Solicitor General if he can inform me whether any agency fees are now paid? I am credibly informed that the business of criminal prosecution is conducted on agency terms, and that the Treasury Solicitor to the Director of Public Prosecutions attains the commission upon the proceeds of the business. If that is so, I wish the Attorney General to say whether the commission so paid goes into the personal pocket of the Solicitor whose pay is asked for here, or whether it goes into the Exchequer? If it goes into the Exchequer, why is it not shown in the Vote? That is a query I address to the Attorney General; but the point to which I attach much more importance, the point to which the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Bury (Sir Henry James), I know, attaches considerable importance, is that which I first mentioned—namely, the fact that the duties and the interests of magistrates' clerks in rural districts conflict one with the other. It is certainly a very serious blot upon the administration of justice that you should have a man brought up in the first instance before one who practically decides whether the man shall be committed for trial or not, and who is himself interested in the committal of the prisoner. I trust the Attorney General will give the Committee some information upon the points I have raised.

Sir RICHARD WEBSTER: First of all, let me say a word or two in regard to the supposed allowance of commission with respect to any work which is undertaken on agency terms. As far as I know, there is no foundation whatever for that suggestion. The other matter referred to by the hon. Gentleman the Member for East Donegal (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) is one which does require consideration — namely, whether the clerks to magistrates in rural districts should not be subjected to the prohibition to which clerks to magistrates in boroughs are already subjected. I have had communication made to me on this point, and I have called the attention of the Home Secretary to the matter; and I have no doubt that it will be further considered. I have long been of opinion that some such similar restriction ought to be made. With regard to the question raised by the hon. Member for the Camborne Division of Cornwall (Mr. Conybeare), I think it is right to say that the whole question of this Office of Public Prosecutor is now under the consideration of a Committee. That Committee will inquire as to whether it is necessary that there should be so large a staff, and as to whether the work is being properly done. As a matter of fact, the Treasury Solicitor acts for a great many Public Departments. I know he does a considerable amount of Treasury, and War Office, and Admiralty work, work which used to be done by independent solicitors at great cost. I do not think, therefore, that it will be found that the staff is capable of large reduction; but still the matter is now undergoing thorough examination by a strong Committee.

Original Question put, and *agreed to.*

Resolution to be reported *To-morrow.*

Committee to sit again *To-morrow.*

LABOURERS' ALLOTMENTS BILL.

(*Mr. Ritchie, Mr. Secretary Stanhope, Mr. W. H. Long.*)

[BILL 329.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Ritchie.*)

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby): Mr. Speaker, I think the history of this Bill is a remarkable one, and is deserving the attention of this House. In the course of the present Session a Bill was introduced by my hon. Friend the Member for the Rugby Division of Warwickshire (Mr. Cobb), who has taken great interest in this question of allotments. That Bill was before the House, and on the 16th of May the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) announced that the Government intended immediately to introduce a measure dealing with this subject, and that it would be introduced in the House of Lords. Well, a month elapsed, and no such Bill appeared at all in the House of Lords. The House of Lords has a great many merits, and amongst others it has the merit that it is not an overworked Assembly. We frequently hear, as we did the other night, eulogiums passed on the House of Lords for the manner in which it does its Business, and how little it talks and wastes its time. [*Ministerial cheers.*] Yes; and why is it, then, that the House of Lords did not see the Allotments Bill in the month of May or the month of June? It is true that an independent Member of the other House of Parliament introduced a Bill on the subject of allotments; but that Bill was quietly and civilly got rid of, and on the 16th of June a declaration was made, I must not say by whom, and I must not say where, but it was to the effect that there was another serious difficulty, which had been alluded to, and that was what Local Authority the powers of the Bill should be entrusted to. In that declaration it was said—

> "If you take the Court of Quarter Sessions, or some Central Body not specially concerned in the matter, it is possible it may deal with it in a perfunctory spirit, and that no active result will follow; but, on the other hand, if

power be given to a Local Sanitary Body, such as the Board of Guardians, it is taking an optimist view if you think there is not some danger in the management of local funds, as well as some chance of disturbing the peace of the locality."

And furthermore—

> "I confess I should have preferred that we had been able to pass our Local Government Bill before we dealt with this question, for I doubt very much whether, with the present organization of the Committee, you can do much with it in the shape of finding a fit authority to administer the measure."—(3 *Hansard*, [316] 243-4.)

These were the views on the 16th of June of the Prime Minister as regards an Allotments Bill which the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons had said should certainly immediately be introduced into the House of Lords. We have the Leader in one House stating that a Bill would be introduced into the other House, and we have the Prime Minister the Leader of the other House saying that it is impossible to deal with the question at all, and that there are two things which must certainly not be done —the powers must not be confided to Boards of Guardians or Quarter Sessions. And now we have got a Bill which confers the powers upon both the Bodies I have mentioned. That is a remarkable circumstance; indeed, so singular a condition of things requires some explanation. On the 2nd of July —that is to say, a fortnight after this declaration was made—a rather remarkable event occurred—namely, the Spalding Election; and on the 16th of July the President of the Local Government Board, in the face of the declaration of the Prime Minister that there should be no allotments until the Local Government Bill had been passed, introduced a Bill which is founded on the two very principles which were so denounced by the Head of the Government. That is the remarkable history with regard to the progress of this Bill in the present Session. However, we have got the Bill before us—[*Ministerial cheers*]—and I am very glad of it; and I want to tell you what part of the Bill I am glad to see. Now, the Bill may be divided into two portions—there is the principle of the Bill, and there is the machinery of the Bill. As regards the principle of the Bill, I, for one, am entirely in accord with it; I always have been in accord with it. [*Ironical Ministerial cheers.*] Oh, yes; have Gentlemen opposite always been in accord with it? Why, it is the great principle of the "three acres and a cow" which we fought out at the Election of 1885. We all remember that campaign. [*Cries of* "One acre!"] Yes; one acre without the cow. Now, this Bill includes a very important principle to which I venture to call the attention of the House. The principle of the Bill, as I take it, is to be this—that the Local Authority is to have power by compulsion to acquire land for the advantage of the community in letting it out, or otherwise disposing of it to individuals. Now, that is the principle, and that was the principle of the great contest over the "three acres and a cow." Well, on the one side, in favour of the "three acres and a cow," were ranged my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain), and last, but not least, my hon. Friend the Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham (Mr. Jesse Collings), followed at a humble distance by myself and Friends; but the two hon. Gentlemen I have mentioned had very formidable opponents on that occasion. My noble Friend the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington), who, I regret, is not present to-night, and the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen), were the great opponents of the principle of "three acres and a cow." They used very hard language up and down the country of the two hon. Gentlemen to whom I have referred. This was the great charge of Socialism which was brought against my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham; but, happily, we are all Socialists now. This is the very thing that was determined on that occasion. There was one thing, at all events, which we were never to have. Lord Salisbury, speaking at Newport, said— "Whatever you have, you must not have compulsion." That was the one principle which the Conservative Party and a section of our Friends, the Dissentient Liberals, never would listen to at all. Well, now, after the Election of 1885, occurred also a very important event, and that was the celebrated Amendment to the Address moved by my hon Friend the Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham (Mr.

Jesse Collings), a most exemplary and innocent Resolution.

Mr. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley): And you supported it.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: Yes; I supported it most heartily. I know, perhaps, as much of the secrets of it as my hon. Friend; but I shall tell no tales out of school. Now, that Resolution declared that facilities should be afforded to the agricultural labourers and others in the rural districts to obtain allotments of small holdings on equitable terms as to rent and security of tenure. The whole of the Conservative Party was up in arms against that Resolution. [*Ministerial cries of* "No, no!"] Oh, yes; my right hon. Friend the Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire (Mr. Chaplin) represented the Government on that occasion, and he said there was one thing he would have nothing to do with, and that was that blessed word "compulsion."

Mr. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): I never used that phrase.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: I have extracted the words carefully from a report of the right hon. Gentleman's speech; but if he disavows the words, of course I accept his disavowal. Will the right hon. Gentleman, however, deny that he said that this question was one which ought to be left to the country gentlemen of England to deal with, and that they would deal with it more fairly than any Alderman of Birmingham or any member of the Caucus; and that he said, moreover, that this Resolution—this innocent Resolution—of my hon. Friend the Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham was full of those predatory instincts of a class whose Socialistic schemes had found such powerful exponents in these days, and were adequately represented by the Member for Ipswich — my hon. Friend the Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham was then the Member for Ipswich — and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham? The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Chaplin) said that the Resolution was full of the predatory instincts of a Socialistic class, and he ended by a declaration I am sure he will not disavow. And it was this—that, speaking for himself and the Government, he said, emphatically, "No" to that Amendment. Well, the Government staked its existence upon the rejection of the Amendment, and it fell. The next stage in the history of this very important event is that a few months afterwards my hon. Friend the Member for the Ilkeston Division of Derbyshire (Sir Walter Foster) introduced a Bill which embodied the views of the Resolution of the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Jesse Collings). Again, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire came to the front, and said that he would vote against the second reading of the Bill. I, as representing the Government on that occasion, made a counter declaration by saying that we would vote for the Bill. That was on a Wednesday afternoon. My right hon. Friend the Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire had an ally whom I see now sitting behind me—the hon. Member for the Harrow Division of Middlesex (Mr. Ambrose), and the two of them talked the Bill out. That is the history of that Bill, and on the occasion of the discussion of the Amendment to the Address moved by my hon. Friend the Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham, the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) delivered his views. He was then representing, as I believe he still does, the true and orthodox section of the Liberal Party; and he said that the subject was too great to be disposed of after one night's debate. Well, but we are going to dispose of it now after a debate commencing at half-past 10 on the night of a day well on in August. I always admired the political philosophy of the present Chancellor of the Exchequer. He said that the principle of the Bill was one which "reaches deep down into society," and he said that the principle against which he was contending was that the State should step in and take the place of the individual. The right hon. Gentleman then went on to say that—

> "The position is that it is assumed that voluntary effort has now failed, that the community should come to the rescue, and that we should put on the community at large tasks which I doubt whether the local authorities will be able satisfactorily to perform."

That was the dangerous principle in the unauthorized programme against which the Chancellor of the Exchequer fought all over the country. He congratulated the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain upon the triumph of the unauthorized programme. He said that the right hon. Gentleman had actually succeeded in foisting upon the Liberal Party in the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham (Mr. Jesse Collings) the unauthorized programme against which he and the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) had fought at the hustings all over the country. He would have none of it; and he said that they would be traitors to their consciences if they did not dare to speak out in the House of Commons against that Resolution. The right hon. Gentleman, I am sure, is never a traitor to his conscience. If ever there should appear a Bill which assumes that voluntary effort has failed, and that the community should come to the rescue, he will now, as he did then, unless he be a traitor to his conscience, denounce such a measure. I do not know exactly whether the right hon. Gentleman has ever been converted, or what is the process through which he has gone on this question. The speech of the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Goschen) was an exceedingly heavy one, as his speeches always are. Well, now, will the right hon. Gentleman turn round now, and ask, is the Conservative Party prepared to adopt the principle of compulsion? As the true and orthodox exponent of Liberal principles, he said—"I want to know since when has this formed part of the creed of the free and general Liberal Party?" The right hon. Gentleman represents the free and general Liberal Party, and he said that compulsion should form no part of the creed of such a Party. "I ask," he said, "what was the date of the conversion of the Leaders of the Liberal Party?" Now, these were the doctrines of the right hon. Gentleman in the year 1886. Upon no possible grounds would he consent that there should be acquisition by the community of lands for the purpose of letting them out in allotments. That was a principle which was fatal to society; and, above all, compulsion should never form part of the doctrines of the free and general Liberal Party. Well, it is very remarkable that on that occasion he (Mr. Goschen) was supported by my noble Friend the Member for Rossendale (The Marquess of Hartington). It is generally supposed that what has been called the split in the Liberal Party arose out of the Irish policy of my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone); but it did nothing of the kind. The split of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and of the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale, and the Gentlemen who followed him—the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Bury (Sir Henry James), the noble Lord the Member for Tavistock (Viscount Ebrington), the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Roxburghshire (Mr. Arthur Elliot), the hon. Baronet the Member for the University of London (Sir John Lubbock), Sir John St. Aubyn, Mr. Seely, the hon. Member for Bath (Mr. Wodehouse), and others—broke off from the Liberal Party, not upon the Union at all, but upon the doctrine of land. It was upon this doctrine of land that the first declaration was made. Well, now, I hope we are not going to see a split in the Party opposite; I hope the Chancellor of the Exchequer is not going to split from his new allies as he did from us. If they have adopted this terrible principle of substituting the community for the individual, if they have adopted the dangerous doctrine of compulsion, I hope he is a sincere convert to these doctrines, and that he will adhere to them. It is very satisfactory to us who have maintained for more than two years this doctrine that it should now receive universal acceptance. Oh, there will be other questions which you have declared you will be traitors to your consciences if you do not denounce—there are other questions which you will give way upon. [*Cries of* "Two years!"] Yes, for two years. Why, the Chancellor of the Exchequer has been converted in 24 hours upon the question of revision of rent. I want to know whether this doctrine of compulsion and this doctrine of substituting the community for the individual have been accepted by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and what are the arguments which induced him to accept now what he denounced in 1886? However, as far as the Bill is concerned, I am very glad all these alarms about Socialism and about jobs and dangers to the ratepayers, and all these terrible fears about compulsion are gone, and that we are all agreed. The principles of this Bill are those so long contended for, and so honourably contended for, by the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham (Mr. Jesse Collings), and which, as I say, have obtained our support.

Mr. JESSE COLLINGS: And stopped there.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: I beg my hon. Friend's pardon, that is not so. I have pointed out that I not only supported the Resolution of my hon. Friend, but that I supported the Bill drawn upon the lines of his Resolution, and introduced into the House by the hon. Baronet the Member for the Ilkeston Division of Derbyshire (Sir Walter Foster). I do not know whether my hon. Friend was here to support the Bill or not, but all I can say is that that Bill which was introduced under the authority of the Allotments Committee of Birmingham, was one for which I spoke, and for which I was prepared to vote within a few months after the adoption by the House of the Resolution of my hon. Friend. Well, then it is very satisfactory that these terrible socialistic doctrines are gaining ground. It is a great thing to find the Chancellor of the Exchequer, sitting where he is, recommending the unauthorized programme to the Conservative Party, and the Conservative Party taking to it as if it were their mother's milk. I may add my congratulations to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) upon the illustrious convert he has made upon this occasion. I now come to an important matter—namely, the machinery of the Bill. I am sorry to see that, agreeing entirely, as I do, with the principle of the Bill, that is with the substitution of the community for the individual, and agreeing also with the compulsion without which the Bill, in my opinion, would be absolutely useless, the machinery of the Bill is very imperfect. This Bill was introduced under the circumstances I have stated by the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie), who appeared to me to be at great pains to explain how very unnecessary the Bill was because of the enormous number of allotments already existing in the country.

The PRESIDENT of the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. Ritchie) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I beg the right hon. Gentleman's pardon, that is not a proper interpretation of my speech.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: That was the impression produced on my mind. The greater part of the right hon. Gentleman's speech was occupied in showing what a great number of allotments there were all over the country, conveying the impression that there was very little necessity for anything more to be done, and that really this Bill was not very necessary but that he thought he would introduce it. That was the impression his speech made on my mind. He certainly expressed the hope that there would not be occasion to use it, and the whole speech seemed to be inspired with the spirit that we should do as little as possible, and that he would rather not have done anything at all. Well, there are three requisites in a Bill of this kind; first of all that you will have workable compulsory powers. Now, are the compulsory powers here workable? You have, in the first place, the Boards of Guardians, which Lord Salisbury says will disturb the peace of localities. I do not know why, but I think they are not generally regarded as very truly representative bodies, at all events, for such purposes as the Bill contemplates. When we recollect the principles upon which Boards of Guardians are elected it is quite obvious that these terrible Socialistic principles are not likely to find great favour with them. Then the next proceeding is that if the Local Authorities find the proprietors of the land unreasonable they are to appeal to the Court of Quarter Sessions, and the Court of Quarter Sessions is to exercise this power of compulsion. It is almost difficult to treat a proposal of that kind as a serious proposal. Does anyone imagine that such an authority as that is likely to exercise the principles of compulsion at all? I will say nothing more than what Lord Salisbury has said of them—namely, "That the Court of Quarter Sessions is an authority who would be likely to deal with it in a perfunctory spirit, and that no real results would follow." Such are the words of the head of the Government which produces this Bill. Then, having gone through the Board of Guardians and the Court of Quarter Sessions, it is to go to the Local Government Board, who are to introduce a Bill to carry it out. Can anyone go through the farce of believing that such a measure as this is meant to be worked at all? Perhaps, the fact may allay some of the terrible fears as to the Socialistic principle of the community taking the place of the individual, or as to compulsion that though the principle is admitted the machinery as constructed throughout the Bill will not work. Well, there is a second thing which is necessary—namely, that there shall be provision against extortionate prices. I consider that no measure of this kind will really be of any value unless you have a provision in it that the authorities shall be able to acquire land at a reasonable price; that there shall be no method of swelling prices with which we are familiar under compulsory clauses. Then, there is another thing of very great importance—namely, the prices at which these lands are to be let. It is said there are a large number of allotments already existing in the country. Have the right hon. Gentlemen whose names are on the back of the Bill ever inquired at what prices these allotments are let, or what relation the rents bear to the ordinary agricultural rent? There are hon. Gentlemen sitting behind me who are much more intimately acquainted with this matter than I am, and who will, no doubt, inform the House on the subject, but my information is that in a great number of these cases the rents are double, and very often a great deal more than treble those of agricultural rents. What is the use, therefore, of quoting allotments held on such terms as any mitigation of the necessity for a Bill of this description? Then, again, there is a question as to the extent of the letting. Since the 16th of June the Government seem to have had their attention turned to this point, and they have resolved upon an acre. Now, if the letting is confined to an acre, that will entirely exclude pasture letting, and I am quite sure that is not the wish of my hon. Friend the Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham (Mr. Jesse Collings). As a result of my observations I do not distinguish the least in the world between a man having a small grass field in which he can keep a cow or a small plot on which he can grow vegetables. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] Well, I happen to live in a district which is surrounded by people who have these small holdings, and who hold them with great advantage. I am extremely sorry that there should be a measure passed which should not afford facilities for lettings of this kind if the nature of the country is such as lends itself to such lettings. Of course I know districts where it is not possible, but on the other hand there are many districts where it is possible the best farm letting you could have would be a pasture field of two or three acres. I think it would be well to leave the extent of the letting to the Local Authorities, who undoubtedly would be the best judges, within reasonable limits, of what should be the size of the holdings. I do not see why it is necessary to restrict the size of the lettings to one acre. These are the observations I have to make upon the machinery of the Bill. I think the machinery of the Bill is totally defective in the multiplication of authorities to which you have entrusted it. I think that is a very grave defect in the Bill. I think that the Bill is also very defective, inasmuch as there is no provision made that land should be acquired at a reasonable rate. That is the second defect of the Bill. I also think, though I am very willing to accept one acre in the Bill, that the letting ought not to be restricted to one acre. I think that if you had a competent Local Authority you might very fairly leave the matter to them with a confidence that they would only let such land as could be used for the advantage of the people to whom it was let. Then what are we to do with this Bill which I think is sound in its principle, though defective in its machinery. I think it is quite clear we ought to vote for the second reading, if only to secure the advantage of the support of the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen). I think it is well the Session should not close without an opportunity being afforded the right hon. Gentleman of showing that without being a traitor to his conscience he is able to approve the principle of this Bill. He is no longer alarmed at the community assuming these duties. He is no longer terrified at the principle of compulsion, and you ought never to make the process of conversion too hard and difficult. The Chancellor of the Exchequer is such a promising convert, he has already given up so many sacred principles from which he declared he never could depart, and we will encourage him in that course by reading this Bill of his Government a second time. But, to say I believe this Bill really will work, that it will ever produce the results at which it is aimed would be to say that which I do not think. I am perfectly certain that so long as you keep this Bill with such machinery as that you have put into it it will never move at all. I do not know whether it is possible at this time of the Session, or whether it is possible at all to amend this Bill so as to give it real life and vitality; but, agreeing, as I do, cordially with the principles of the Bill, I shall take the course on this Bill which I have on all Bills ever produced on this subject—namely, support the second reading of the measure.

Mr. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley): The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt), in his concluding words, said he is going to vote for this Bill; but the principal part of his speech has not borne upon the question of allotments at all, but upon the consistency of hon. Gentlemen opposite. I think that the right hon. Gentleman, in attempting to convict others of inconsistency, is a sight for gods and men. If the right hon. Gentleman would publish a book entitled "Harcourt on Consistency," it could only be excelled in the extent of sale, and the amount of interest it would create by another book, if it could be written, entitled "Consistency on Harcourt." What is the difference between the right hon. Gentleman and hon. Members opposite? The difference is simply this—that the right hon. Gentleman gave pledges and broke them, and hon. Members opposite gave pledges and endeavoured to keep them. I wonder the right hon. Gentleman was not ashamed to refer to the General Election of 1885. He said that this subject was the great principle involved in the General Election of 1885. [Sir William Harcourt: No, no; *and Ministerial cries of* "Yes, yes!"] I agree with him.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: I said the battle was fought upon it.

Mr. JESSE COLLINGS: That makes my argument stronger. The battle in 1885 was fought upon this question, and it was a great battle, won by the votes of the men whom this question affects. In their innocence they gave their votes to the Party of which the right hon. Gentleman was a responsible Member, on the distinct faith that this question was to be dealt with; but as soon as the right hon. Gentleman and his Colleagues came into power on the vote of 1885 they threw aside all these considerations, and nothing has ever been done by them. I am sorry, both for the tone of the debates in this House, and for the right hon. Gentleman's political reputation, that there should be such a repitition of the Hudibrastic speeches with which the right hon. Gentleman favours us. I wish that all questions brought before the House were treated more seriously and on their merits, and not from the point of view of that Bench or this. We know that both astronomers and landscape painters tell us that position is everything in regard to the subject; and the position of the seat occupied in this House by Members is everything, it seems to me, to be the view to be taken. Then, again, the right hon. Gentleman alluded to my Resolution in June, 1886. It is quite true that there was another pledge—the strongest pledge, it seems to me, that politicians can give—that this question should be dealt with; but as soon as the question had served as a hobby-horse on which right hon. Gentlemen could ride into power it was kicked away, and nothing more was heard about it. I should have thought the right hon. Gentleman and his Colleagues would have kept their proceedings of 1886 as much as possible in the dark. As soon as the subject of the Resolution in favour of allotments had served its object it was cast aside, and the then Prime Minister went out of his way to speak of me as a man whose views he never sympathized with. I think there is something due to consistency—that if right hon. Gentlemen ride into power on a particular question they should not immediately kick away the ladder on which they have got into power. I am told that they never meant anything by that Resolution—that they meant Ireland, or something else. I have always refused to believe, that I cannot conceive, any lower depth of degradation in politics than for hon. and right hon. Gentlemen to accept a Resolution which places them in power, and, at the same time, in their inmost thoughts having no intention whatever of giving effect to it. Therefore, I refuse to believe that of the right hon. Gentleman and his Colleagues. The difference between the right hon. Gentleman and hon. and right hon. Gentlemen who are trying to pass this measure is, that the latter may have changed their opinions, but the former have broken their pledges. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby said the right hon. Member for Sleaford (Mr. Chaplin) gave an emphatic "No" to this question; but the right hon. Gentleman himself did worse. He gave an emphatic "Yes" to the Resolution before he got into power, and reserved an emphatic "No" when he was in power. Now, Sir, this appears to me to be the thread going through the speech we have just listened to—that the right hon. Gentleman, and others with him, are very much vexed to think that a Conservative Government is dealing with this question. The right hon. Gentleman endeavoured to make a point out of the fact that he had supported a Bill on this subject—the second reading of the Bill. He did support the Bill which was introduced last Session, and he seemed to take great credit for it; but to what did that amount? To very little, seeing that while in power, and having the opportunity of doing something, the right hon. Gentleman gave no support to that policy, and it was not until he was out of power that he had endeavoured to advance the interests of the labourers who desire to have allotments.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: I beg the hon. Member's pardon. I was speaking for the Government.

Mr. JESSE COLLINGS: Yes; that makes it still worse; because the right hon. Gentleman, while declining to do what, as a Member of the Government, he could do—namely, introduce a measure on behalf of the Government, satisfied his conscience by voting for a private Member's Bill on a Wednesday afternoon. If the right hon. Gentleman can find any justification in that very well; but, at any rate, we are not to be blinded by any such form of reading as that. Besides this, what did the Government say on a recent occasion? Why, that they opposed private legislation, because they were going to bring in a Bill of their own. That, surely, is reason enough for any Government to oppose a Bill, or to refuse to support a private Member's Bill if they pledged themselves to bring on a measure of their own, provided they mean to redeem their pledges which, in the present case, Her Majesty's Government have given sufficient indication that they mean to do. Coming to the measure, to me it is a great source of satisfaction, and I believe it is a source of great satisfaction to others who have this question at heart, to find the House seriously engaged on the question of allotments to labourers. For many years past this question has been before us with very little result. I do not think upon this question that either side of the House can reproach the other to any great extent. From the years 1881 to 1885 the question was talked out, counted out, kicked out without any impartiality all round; and it has only been within the past two or three years that it has been taken up and brought within the region of practical politics. There has been one difficulty in the way of making progress with it, and that has been the question of compulsion. That difficulty was introduced by both sides of the House. It was introduced by members of the schools of political economy, no matter on which side of the House they sat; therefore there is no room for any section of the House to cast reflection upon the other for the non-carrying out of this policy. I congratulate the Government, and I think the country will recognize their efforts in regard to two particular points of difficulty—namely, that which was always a difficulty, the question of the compulsory acquisition of the land and the question of the Local Authority for administrative purposes. I think that if we should go to a General Election again I and others who spoke so strongly at previous elections would be ashamed to say anything more about allotments, seeing that since 1885 nothing has been done, and nothing has been attempted to be done, until now; and now I come to the difficulty to which the right hon. Gentleman referred as to local government and so on. Every Allotments Bill, or, indeed, any Bill affecting the rural classes, must suffer from the want of that which does not exist—namely, the want of a good County Authority; therefore, no Government is to be blamed on that head; but let us admit that the Government has chosen the best authority that exists in the towns. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] Well, take the urban districts. I suppose there is nothing better there in the way of Local Authority than the Town Council. I do not hear any contradiction to that. Mind you, that is a new idea. It was not intended or brought prominently forward at first that Town Councils in large boroughs should have the advantage of allotments; but the Government has placed that in the front; it has put the matter into the hands of the Town Councils, who, I believe, will use this Bill very largely; and they have also put into the Bill, that as soon as we get those "rural municipalities"— which, we think, according to the pledges given by all sides of the House, cannot be more than another 12 months ahead—these shall be the authority in rural districts. What could they have done more? Those two principles being conceded all other difficulties in connection with this Bill are minor ones. The two principles of compulsory purchase of land, and the Local Authority, so far as administration goes, being put upon one side, all the rest is plain sailing. Of course, we want to amend the methods and the manner by which the principles of the Bill are carried out. We think they are capable of great improvement, and I trust the Government, having admitted the principle, will, though they might rather disappoint other people, accept this Amendment in a generous spirit so as to make the Bill thoroughly effective. The Amendment will affect three things besides minor points. They will provide for setting the Act in motion, so that it may not become a dead letter in rural municipalities—I have no fear of its becoming a dead letter in the urban districts. They will provide for the methods of purchase, and the complement of one acre of arable land which is the three acres of pasture land. Those are the three principal things, and, above all, I hope the Government will determine to pass the Bill this Session. I know the Government will pass it if they can; but I trust they will do so, no matter what obstacles or what delays may rise up before them—I trust that they will pass an Allotments Bill this Session. Time, no doubt, is important, and I have no wish to detain the House. I should not have detained the House so long as I have were it not for those remarkable speeches—remarkable though usual, but never ceasing to be remarkable—from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby. I would give anything if I had the twentieth part or even the hundredth part of the swagger, and that particular element which I leave the House to describe, with which the right hon. Gentleman is so richly endowed. I need not detain the House with anything about the present supply of allotments. All I have to say is that if a district is well supplied the Bill will not be wanted, but that if it is not supplied then the Bill will become operative. If there are so many allotments already existing as some hon. Gentlemen say there are, what does that fact prove? It weakens the contention of those who say that labourers do not care for allotments. Then, bear in mind that this question is now for the first time receiving legislative encouragement. There has been no security for allotments up to now. They have been subject to the high rents of the last year or two, and all sorts of difficulty, and yet, in spite of everything, enormous numbers of allotments exist, therefore proving the pressing character of the demand; besides this, the measure will create a demand to a large extent, for it is a mistake to suppose that it is only the labourers who want allotments. It will be a great blessing for the urban population, both from an economic point of view and from a Tory point of view. We cannot over-estimate the extent to which in a certain number of our manufacturing towns the workmen, who perhaps have only three or four days work a week in bad times, fill up their time in an economical and even profitable manner on their allotments, and will not only fill up their time and make some profit, but secure a solid addition to their dinner tables. The more we go on this principle the more those allotments are taken up in the country, provided only that the land will be cultivated, the more we should rejoice. And one other thing I do hope from this Bill is that the supply of milk, the want of which in our rural districts is creating such havoc on the physical condition of the poorer classes, will be increased. There is this danger about it, that the poorer classes in the rural districts have so long been deprived of milk, have so long been accustomed to bring their children up without milk, that they do not any longer realize the danger and the difficulty and proper provision which the want of milk constitutes. I have no doubt that if this Bill is passed it will not be long before that in every village you will find good ample supply of milk, either by a man keeping a cow himself, or by people being able to buy the milk, as they used to be able to buy it in my younger days, at almost a nominal price. I will not keep the House any longer, I am sorry I have kept it so long; but I wished personally to express my gratitude to the Government for having brought on this practical measure. I believe that the agricultural labourers when they have seen through all the blarney which has been talked to them will believe that after all "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush;" and that that which their self-constituted friends proposed in 1885 and 1886, and did not do, they may be grateful for to Her Majesty's Government. They will remember that the one Party talked so long about this subject, and did nothing with regard to it when they had the opportunity, and that from the other Party they have really got a substantial boon. All this will come out by argument, I do not fear about it, and therefore I trust that the Government, though the Session is late, will persevere and pass the Bill. I must say they are entitled to the thanks of all the friends of the agricultural labourer, and notwithstanding the pressure which has been put upon them from different sides of the House, they have passed Bills of great importance, Bills in which Members are greatly interested, yet they have withstood every importunity, and have dropped other Bills of enormous importance, and have taken up this, I hope with a determination of carrying it through Parliament. I trust we shall pass the second reading, and that the Bill will go through Committee with the improvements which I have indicated. The rural population will then enjoy a great blessing, they will enjoy almost the first piece of legislation of a substantial character which has been done for them, and when the advantages of which they have hitherto had no experience will enable them to appreciate.

Mr. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) made such frequent allusion to myself in the course of his opening remarks, that I trust the House will allow me to intervene for a few moments on this debate. I will not waste the time of this House by dwelling on what seemed to me very factious criticism on the part of the right hon. Gentleman on the House of Lords, and the consistency of Gentlemen who sit upon this side of the House—criticism which, coming from the right hon. Gentleman seems to fall exceedingly flat on his audience, and which, I think, has been sufficiently answered by the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham (Mr. Jesse Collings). The right hon. Member for Derby criticized the Amendments of the Bill, but he tells us that he agrees entirely with its principle. What is the main principle of the Bill according to him? According to the right hon. Gentleman, the main principle is that land shall be acquired for allotments by compulsion. I take exception altogether to that statement. The principle of this Bill, as I understand it, is to facilitate the provision of allotments for enabling people in this country, if possible, by voluntary agreement, but by compulsion if agreement cannot be entered into. Upon an exceedingly incorrect statement, the right hon. Gentleman charged Lord Salisbury with inconsistency, and said that, in the celebrated Newport speech, Lord Salisbury declared that he would not, under any circumstances, sanction any compulsion on this subject. That was the second inaccuracy on the part of the right hon. Gentleman. Lord Salisbury, certainly had referred to compulsion at Newport, but it was solely in reference to glebe lands. He declared that he could not sanction the principle of the compulsory purchase of glebe land from the clergy, but so far as regards the general question of the compulsory purchase of allotments he said not one word. Then the right hon. Gentleman declared that when the hon. Member who has just sat down moved his Resolution in this House, the whole of the Party were up in arms, and that I myself had met it with an emphatic "No." The right hon. Gentleman ought to know that that was his third inaccuracy, for I recollect correcting him on this very subject on a former occasion. I told him then what I should have thought it would have been unnecessary for me to rise now and say, that what I offered an emphatic "No" to was a Motion of direct censure on the Government of the day, and that the whole of the speech I made was so strongly in favour of a large extension of the principle of allotments as any speech any hon. Member of the House could possibly have made. Then the right hon. Gentleman said there should be no "blessed word of compulsion," so far as I was concerned in any measure of this kind, and he gave the fourth inaccurate statement in regard to something he supposed I had said in the course of the debate to which I have alluded. I recollect very well making the allusion to the right hon. Member opposite to which the right hon. Gentleman refers, and saying that in dealing with this matter nothing but the "blessed word compulsion" would satisfy them. I never said, for a single moment, that I was not willing to agree to compulsion upon this question. As to what has been said by many of my hon. Friends on this side of the House with regard to the question of allotments, we are all liable to err. Subsequent experience and knowledge of the times than Gentlemen on this side previously held upon the question—especially after the speech just delivered—have convinced us that the instincts of the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham are by no means so predatory as we thought, and we see no reason whatever why hon. Gentlemen on this side should not heartily join with him in the endeavour to pass this Bill. Then, Sir, there was a fifth incorrect charge made by the right hon. Gentleman against me. The right hon. Gentleman declared that I opposed a precisely similar proposal when it was raised in the last Parliament. That is true. I did oppose the Bill introduced in the last Parliament, but what was the character of that Bill? Was it a Bill to facilitate the provision of allotments, and of allotments alone? Nothing of the kind. It was a Bill to facilitate the provision of small holdings going up to 40 acres a-piece, the whole burden of the provision of which was to have been thrown on the rates. In consequence of its character, I opposed that Bill, and if it were now brought forward I should oppose it again to-night. Then the right hon. Gentleman charged the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) with having opposed the unauthorized programme of 1885, and of being perfectly willing to accept it to-day. But what similarity is there I should like to know between the unauthorized programme of that day and the modest proposal before the House now. Why, Sir, it is absurd to suppose that there is any similarity. When the right hon. Gentleman makes an unfounded statement of this kind, and when he charges us who sit on this side of the House with inconsistency, it surely would be wise of him to remember what his own record is on that point. He has heard a good deal on that subject already from the hon. Gentleman who sits near me, and I desire to take this opportunity of stating that if there is one man in this House more thoroughly consistent than another, and who has always been so from the first, it is the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham. I recollect perfectly well the first occasion on which he raised this question—on the 20th of July, 1883. What was the attitude of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby and his Colleagues who were in power at that time, with regard to the action of the hon. Member? There was not one amongst them who had a single word to say in support of the proposition of the hon. Member, and so entirely did they leave him in the cold that, although they were the Government in power at that time, and were in a position to influence the Business of this House, they allowed the House to be counted out. If I may be permitted to refer for a few moments to the Bill before the House, I would say that I am heartily glad to see that amongst the very first measures apart from Irish legislation which the Government have found themselves able to deal with is this Bill on the subject of allotments. It is a measure undoubtedly of vast interest and of the greatest importance to an enormous number of our population, and so far as the working classes of our rural districts are concerned, I know of nothing in the way of legislation that is more likely to confer a real and substantial boon upon them than an Act providing them with facilities for obtaining decent sized allotments of land at a fair and reasonable rent and within a convenient distance of their homes. That I take it to be the object of the Bill now before us; that I take to be the object that my right hon. Friend the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) has in view; and that being so, I can only say that I, for one, subject to Amendments which I think it will be desirable to make in Committee, one or two of which I shall regard as being of considerable importance, am anxious to give it every support in my power. Now, having said that, I hope I may be allowed to offer one or two criticisms upon the measure as it stands. Now, it seems to me that the first thing we have to do and the first thing we have to consider in regard to a Bill of this kind is what is the best and the most satisfactory way of obtaining the object which you have in view. I am quite clear upon one point, that far and away the best means of providing the different classes whom we wish to provide with allotments at the present moment is to induce the landowners or the landlords in a particular locality to provide them themselves. I do not notice any provision in the Bill calling upon the Local Authorities with this object in the first instance. What the Bill provides is this, that the Local Authorities where there is a demand for allotments shall acquire land, if possible, by agreement, and, failing that, then powers are given them to acquire it by compulsion. Well, Sir, I am willing, and always have been quite willing from the first, to accept the principle of compulsion, and I have not the smallest objection to the Local Authorities acquiring land either by agreement or compulsion, if it is absolutely necessary in order to attain the object you have in view. What I have always contended is that these measures should be resorted to only as a last resource. It is far better, in my opinion —and I do not think there can be a question about this—it is far better, both on the ground of expense and from every other possible point of view, to avoid collision with the landowner or landlord as long as you possibly can. As to the machinery of the Bill, the House will observe that the whole of the initiation of proceedings in connection with this measure is placed in the hands of the Sanitary Authority. Well, the Sanitary Authority is, of course, of two kinds. You have the Urban Sanitary Authority and you have the Rural Sanitary Authority. I do not wish to say much about the Urban Sanitary Authority; I am not at all sure that they are not the best body to deal with a question of this kind; but I doubt if this measure is likely to have a very large effect in towns, especially in large towns. It seems to me unlikely, from the nature of the question. I do not think it is likely to have a large effect, and even if it were largely availed of under its provisions, the Urban Sanitary Authority would have to go to the County Authorities before they could bring the compulsory powers into play. But as regards the Rural Sanitary Authority, my objections to the Bill in its present form are more serious. The Rural Sanitary Authority is, of course, the Guardians. The Guardians consist of certain magistrates who are resident in the district and who, as a general rule, I think form part of the Boards, and in addition to these magistrates the Boards consist of farmers. I confess to some apprehension that the Rural Sanitary Authority, as the motive power and as the body having the initiative in this matter, will prove to some extent a snare and a delusion. Why, in the first place, everyone knows perfectly well that the Guardians, as a rule, would be quite as much afraid to do anything to increase the burden on the rates as I was myself last night, and with very much more reason. They well know that under this Bill allotments ought to be self-supporting, and I cannot help entertaining a very grave doubt that the Guardians will be desirous of avoiding everything that has a tendency to impose risk of a fresh increase on the rates, especially at a time like the present. And not only that, but the people who employ the labour of the persons who desire the allotments are not likely to be particularly anxious to afford those persons more facile modes of employment than they have at the present moment. I would like to see this matter gone into very carefully, as I am anxious that this should be made a really effective measure. I must say that I should like to see the initiative to a much greater extent placed in the hands of the people who will want these allotments for themselves. I should like to see a certain number of the ratepayers and electors of the district hold a meeting and say to the Sanitary Authority—"We want allotments, and it is your business to move in providing them;" and then, if the Sanitary Authority failed to act upon this requisition, I would give the ratepayers power to appeal to the County Authority. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby just now said—"An appeal to the Quarter Sessions! Why, they are the very last people in the world to facilitate the provision of allotments." I should like to know on what ground he said such a thing as that. Who are the Quarter Sessions? Why, they are nearly all of them country gentlemen, and it is not denied, and it will not be denied by a single Member of this House, that the great majority of these gentlemen have already provided the allotments required by the rural population. If hon. Members will look at the most recent Returns on this subject they will find that though there may be still a large unsatisfied demand in this matter, yet that a great deal has been done already; and it is only reasonable to suppose that the gentlemen constituting the Quarter Sessions will not, when appealed to, hesitate to compel the minority of landlords to do what they have done themselves. And now I would say one word on the subject of the limit of one acre. Some people think that one acre is too small an amount of land to give in the shape of an allotment, whilst others think that it is too large an amount. Now, I sympathize very much with the view of the hon. Gentleman opposite who is anxious to afford facilities to the rural population for providing themselves with milk. Undoubtedly it would be of the greatest possible benefit to afford these facilities; but I honestly confess that, having given some thought to this question, I do not see my way at present to providing by compulsion three acres of pasturage for every cottager. I do not see where it is to be obtained, especially in agricultural districts, where grass land is very scarce. With every sympathy for the view of the hon. Gentleman, it would be dishonest on my part if I did not say that I do not see my way to carrying out the plan which he seems to think so desirable. I would have limited the allotments under the Bill to half an acre instead of an acre if I could have my own way. I have here a great authority on the matter — the evidence given by Mr. Arch, who was lately a Member of this House, before the Agricultural Commission in 1881. It is quite true that Mr. Arch had strongly contended that if a man was able to do it, and if he had been successful in one allotment, there was no reason why he should not have more, yet on the general ground of what was most desirable to obtain Mr. Arch made this statement; I myself asked him the question; I said with regard to those who must remain in their present position—speaking of the agricultural labourers—

> "I want to know what size of allotment is sufficient in your practical experience to give them a comfortable home and a good garden?"

His reply was—

> "If I were going to apportion the land out, I should give a quarter of an acre first, and if a man cultivated that properly and made the best of it, I would increase it to half an acre, and if he did not do that he should not have it."

That is the opinion of Mr. Arch, a representative of the labourers, who knows as much on this subject, I suppose, as any Member of the House of Commons, and I am bound to say that, from any experience I have acquired on this subject, my views upon the matter would be identical. I would call attention to Clause C, which provides that no building whatever shall be erected on a holding. Now, I think that it would be a mistake to pass such a provision. While it might be right to provide that no building shall be erected to be used as a dwelling house or a workshop, supposing a holding is half-a-mile away from a building, surely it would be hard to prevent the labourer from erecting a tool house to hold his spade and other implements without compelling him to carry them to and fro. Then there is nothing that the agricultural labourer looks more forward to and there is nothing that more shows that he is in a prosperous condition than being able to keep a pig, and I think it is very desirable that the measure should permit him to build a pigstye on his allotment. I would ask for information only with regard to one clause more, and that is as to the last line of the Bill, which says that the land is to include the right of way or easement. I do not quite understand that provision, but probably when we get into Committee on the Bill the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board will explain what it means. I would now only re-echo the words of the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham—namely, that the Government will use every endeavour to pass the Bill this Session.

Mr. WINTERBOTHAM (Gloucester, Cirencester): When the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) introduced this measure on the 18th July, I had not the pleasure of hearing his speech, but I read it, and I saw that he said this—

> "The Allotment Question has made great progress during the past few years. . . . . Nearly one-half of the whole number of agricultural labourers in England and Wales have been provided with allotments."—(3 *Hansard*, [317] 1303-4.)

The figures he gave to prove this are as follows:—In the first place, he estimated the number of labourers at 800,000, and said that of these the number holding under one-eighth of an acre was 131,207; the number holding from one-eighth to a quarter of an acre was 103,915; and the number holding from one acre to four acres was 35,036; and his conclusion was "so that if we deduct the cottage gardens, nearly one-half are provided with allotments." Now, Sir, the answer to this is first of all that allotments under one-eighth of an acre are a parody altogether on the word allotment. As has already been pointed out by the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham (Mr. Jesse Collings) you have not alone got to consider the 800,000 agricultural labourers, but you have to consider the large urban population which wants allotments every bit as much. The existing 386,513 allotments are probably not more than two-thirds, and possibly not more than one-half occupied by agricultural labourers, and this applies even more to the occupiers of cottage gardens of which the right hon. Gentleman spoke. But the right hon. Gentleman said nothing about the prices and conditions upon which the voluntary system meets the wants of our large population. I have taken some pains to inquire into this subject, and I only wish that every other Member of the House had done the same—I dare say a great many have done so. I have taken pains to find out, so far as my own constituency is concerned, how many allotments exist there, and what are the conditions under which they are held. I had the honour of addressing the House on this subject during the last Parliament, and I then gave a few figures bearing upon this question. Since then I have collected a great many more. I have Returns from 100 parishes, which I should be very happy to show to the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board, and I find from these that only in 10 per cent of the cases is the price charged for the allotment land the same as the agricultural rent—I mean adding to it the 10 per cent which ought, of course, to be added for local taxation—10 or even 15 per cent. I think it is only fair, as I have already mentioned the names of those noblemen who charge for the allotments they let four or five times the amount of the agricultural rent, to say that in the reference I am now making I have in my mind, as the estates upon which agricultural rents only are charged, those of the Earl of Harrowby and Lord Gainsborough. According to these Returns, on 75 per cent of the holdings the rent charged is more than double the agricultural rent, and in the case of the others the rent goes up to five, six, or even 10 times the agricultural rent. I have a letter here from a labourer. I think I had better not mention names, though the communication is open to any hon. Member who may wish to see it. The writer says—

> "I return you the forms filled in as well as I can gather information, but there is a large quantity of land within the village that is let as garden which was originally let as allotments, but which the tenants have planted with fruit trees, and are now charged from £8 to £10 per acre."

The price of agricultural land there is from 25*s*. to 28*s*. per acre. Another letter which I have received discloses a state of things which prevails in connection with a great many of these allotments. The writer says—

> "I have answered the questions as near as I am able to do. There are about as many people here as have no allotments at all, as have got allotments, and you will see that there is a great deal of difference in what the farmers and what the poor pay. We get served bad by our

landlady. We must not offend in the least or it's 'out you go!' as there is always someone ready to take what is given up. We used to pay more than we do now. The people begin to think now there is some chance of having some land, and they say they know now who their real friends are."

"We must not offend in the least or it's 'Out you go'"—such are the terms on which many allotments are held; the price is often cruel and unfair and the conditions are those which accompany serfdom, and not those proper to dealings between free men. What we contend for is not the voluntary allotment given by a kind landowner, or by a landowner for political reasons; but what we contend for is the right of every labourer to occupy on fair terms as much of his native soil as he can fairly cultivate by spade culture. We look upon this as a right and as no favour at all. The great fallacy that underlies the argument of the President of the Local Government Board is that as regards price and conditions, he does not make allowance for the fact that voluntary allotments do not at all comply with what we conceive to be absolutely necessary. But I agree with the right hon. Gentleman that we have made an enormous advance in this question of late. It was only in the summer of 1885 that many of us fought our elections on this question of the right of the labourers to allotments, and received for our pains a good deal of what I considered at the time to be unmerited abuse. We were denounced as plunderers and Socialists for preaching as our gospel the right of the labourer to enjoy "a piece of his native land for spade culture at a fair rent." I will not allude to anything that was said by the hon. Baronet the Member for the Tewkesbury Division of Gloucester (Sir John Dorington), who was my opponent at that time. I prefer to take as a sample of the attacks made upon us what was said by two hon. Gentlemen who were then, but who are not now, Members of this House. I am not going to trouble the House with long quotations; but I would mention that while spending a little holiday in Yorkshire I had the pleasure of hearing these words by the Hon. Guy Dawnay—

"He was going to deal with these doctrines, the immorality of which was only equalled by their absurdity and impracticability. . . . Mr. Jesse Collings's idea of depriving the owners of land of their property—what he called the allotment system—was the very worst system that could possibly be conceived for the labouring classes of the country."

These words were used at Marska, in the Cleveland Division of the North Riding. Mr. James Lowther, on the same occasion, said—

"They must all have listened with great pleasure to the masterly speech of their Member, Mr. Dawnay, who had shown that he had a complete grasp of this political problem of the land, and who had completely exposed the crude fallacies and untenable balderdash propounded by Mr. Jesse Collings."

Hon. Gentlemen on the opposite side of the House now find very much better language to use towards my hon. Friend the Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham, and he gives them back very suave speeches. The language he uses now is rather different from that employed by him with regard to Tory landlords at the time of which I am speaking. But I leave him to settle that matter with them—I will not interfere with the harmony of the evening. A great and a happy change has come over the minds of a great many Members, and I am not one of those who desire to throw charges of inconsistency at random about the House. With regard to what fell from the right hon. Gentleman opposite the Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire (Mr. Chaplin), who I am sorry to see is not in his place. I did not like to rise to interrupt him when he contradicted the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt); but I have some extracts from the speeches which were delivered in this House by the right hon. Gentleman, and I should like to be permitted to trouble the House with a few words from these, because we have heard a very flat contradiction from the right hon. Gentleman. According to *Hansard* of the 26th January, 1886, the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Chaplin), in the speech of "emphatic No!" which he delivered in the memorable debate on the question of the "three acres and a cow," said he was in favour of Lord Salisbury's glebe scheme, but he ridiculed compulsion. He said—

"Nothing would satisfy them but that word which is of so much blessing and comfort to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham — that blessed word 'compulsion.'"—(3 *Hansard*, [302] 452.)

He went on to speak of the proposal of

Lord Salisbury at Newport as his alternative—

> "If that be done you will find—and this is my answer to the statement of the hon. Member for Ipswich— . . . . in a great number of the parishes of England land thrown upon the market of just about the right amount, and probably just about the right description, and situated in places such as are requisite and most suited for the agricultural labourers of the country."—(*Ibid.* 455.)

The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Western Division of Bristol (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach), who was—I believe I am right in saying—the Leader of the House at the time, spoke in ridicule of—

> "An attempt to redeem all those wild and astounding promises which were made at the General Election to the deluded agricultural labourer."—(*Ibid.* 517.)

Was that right hon. Gentleman a convert to compulsory allotments on the 26th January, 1886? He is reported to have said in *The Times' Reports*, p. 112—

> "Although there are points connected with that important question of compulsion to which I could not hold out for a moment that Her Majesty's Government would be able to give their adhesion."

As allusion has been made to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) in the same debate, I will not give the extract; but it is amusing now to recollect the way in which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) spoke in reply. He said—

> "My right hon. Friend the Member for East Edinburgh (Mr. Goschen) has promised to vote for them—my right hon. Friend is going to exchange sides; but I do not think he will gain much by the change."—(*Ibid.* 515.)

Well, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Lincolnshire (Mr. Chaplin), on the 31st March, 1886, according to Vol. 2 of *The Times*, p. 49, made a speech in opposition to an Allotments Bill. He said—

> "Compulsion should be the last resort in its operation, and his complaint as regarded this Bill was that compulsion was the first thing of all others put in the foreground from beginning to end."

And again he said later on in his speech—

> "What I said was that I did not desire compulsion, but I was not afraid of it."

That is a great advance on the part of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Lincolnshire. On the 26th January, 1886, he ridiculed compulsion; on the 31st March he had got so far that he was "not afraid of it;" and a little later he fathered a Bill which contained a compulsory clause. In a debate upon another measure he spoke of "fine old full-flavoured Tory Resolutions." This right hon. Gentleman who has told us the deep interest he feels in the welfare of the agricultural labourer showed how much he loves them by saying on the second reading of the Technical Instruction Bill that the most effectual reform in educational matters that he knew of, so far as the agricultural interest was concerned, would be that the sons of agricultural labourers, the boys who formerly used to work in our fields, should be allowed to go into the fields at a considerably earlier age than they did now. I do not wonder that an hon. Member on the other side—I think it was the hon. Member for Oldham (Mr. Elliott Lees)—spoke afterwards of that speech and of another speech or two of the same character delivered on that side of the House as speeches of dead Tory fossils. I hope the Government will not listen quite so much to the advice of right hon. and hon. Members on the other side, who are described by the hon. Member for Oldham in that way, because there are hon. Gentlemen on their side of the House who represent large popular constituencies who know the need for these allotments, who know the hearty desire of the people to have them, and who are not willing to be fettered by the old-fashioned prejudices of the squirearchy. I do not propose at this time of night to go into the details of the Bill. I am going to vote for the second reading for the sake of its principle of compulsory powers, because I thoroughly agree with the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer that without compulsion no Allotments Bill will be worth the paper it is written on. I think I have shown that at all events, so far as my own experience goes in my own constituency, the voluntary system has utterly failed. Whoever is charged with the working of the allotment system should have power to take over the existing voluntary allotments, or to see that the rents charged under that system are fair rents. The second great blot, and the greatest blot of all to my mind, in this Bill is its machinery—the bodies to whom the administration of the measure is entrusted. I protest against the proposal to entrust these powers to the Boards of Guardians. "Who are the Boards of Guardians" in the rural districts? Why, they are the farmers of the districts. They are the very men whom Bishop Ellicott advised a few years ago to put Joseph Arch into the pond if he came to their neighbourhood preaching his doctrines. I protest against the Guardians being entrusted with these powers. The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board says he dismisses the County Authority because it is not representative. Well, but are the Guardians representative of the poor? If you want to make them so, you must do three things. You must make the elections by ballot, and not by voting papers. You must abolish the property qualification, and you must adopt the principle of one man one vote, in place of the cumulative system. Lord Salisbury, speaking on the 16th June on Lord Dunraven's Bill, objected, as the House has heard already, both to Quarter Sessions and to the Guardians—to the former because he said they would exercise their powers in a "perfunctory spirit," and to the Guardians because they would act in such a way that there would be "danger to the peace of the locality." It is not often that I agree with Lord Salisbury, but I do agree with him in that. If you are going to give allotments with one hand and take them away with the other by handing over to the Guardians the administration of the Bill, I think the effect of the measure will be that which Lord Salisbury has described. As well might you hand over the administration of the Bill introduced by an hon. Friend of mine to provide sites for the building of chapels for Nonconformists to the Bench of Bishops. I appeal to hon. Gentlemen opposite why, when they take up questions of this kind, do they make their proposals such shams? They passed an Agricultural Holdings Bill for the farmers. They put a clause in it at the end making it permissive, and rendered it worthless. The same with your Technical Instruction Bill. You admit the want of technical instruction, and you make a half-hearted attempt to satisfy it. You make your Bill, so far as the large mass of the population is concerned, entirely worthless; you render its benefits available only to a few. And now, in the present Bill, you say you want to give the agricultural labourers allotments, and yet you hand over the administration of the Bill to men whom you not only know have no sympathy with the agricultural labourers, but are diametrically opposed to their interests. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] The Guardians, in 49 cases out of 50, are Tory farmers, and to the tender mercies of these men, forsooth—these elected Guardians, reinforced, whenever a question of property comes up, by all the *ex officio* Guardians, all the owners of the very property you are to take—you entrust the administration of the law! I submit that if this Bill passes in its present form, and with its present machinery, it will be nothing more nor less than a sham, and will not be worth the paper on which it is written. I appeal to Conservative Members on the other side who do not represent large landed interests—I appeal to Conservative Members on the other side, whom I thoroughly believe to be anxious to promote the interests of the working classes as much as we ourselves—I appeal to them not to let the "dead fossils" of their Party influence the shape which this measure will ultimately bear. I appeal to them to bring their influence to bear upon the Government, and to make this Bill, while they have it in hand, a reality and a blessing to the agricultural poor.

Mr. HULSE (Salisbury): I venture to ask the House to permit me to address a few words in support of the principle of this measure, because, though I am a Member for an urban population, I have passed most of my life in the country, and on an estate and in a district where the practice of granting allotments has existed for many years. I am sure that no one who has witnessed what I have done — the eagerness with which members of my constituency have availed themselves of agricultural holdings secured to them by the good offices of the Mayor of the borough which I represent—will doubt that the working classes, both in town and country, welcome the opportunity of securing for their personal cultivation a piece of land to which they may devote their labour and their skill. On the estate to which I have referred allotments are no new boon. They are not baits thrown out to catch the votes of the newly enfranchised. On the contrary, the labourers on that estate have for the last 40 years been able to secure 40 lugs of land, or a quarter of an acre. In my experience I have never found in urban or rural districts that the granting of allotments has in any way rendered the services of those who have devoted their labour to the soil less valuable to the employers. Nor have I found that they have deserted their work. On the contrary, I have found that in nine cases out of 10 it has produced beneficial social effect. So much for the value of the allotments, both to the employers and the employed. I will now ask the House more especially, if I might do so, to accede to the principle of the Bill that where allotments cannot be otherwise secured the authority of the law may be evoked to compel landowners to grant them. Compulsion and coercion are terms that we have heard used in this House and throughout the country on many occasions lately. They have been used by various speakers to justify varying ideas; but the allotment system is, I think, a necessity, and one which is felt in very many districts. It is a boon which the quiet, industrious, and law-abiding labourers of England most richly deserve. The importance of this debate cannot be exaggerated, and I hope Her Majesty's Government will not allow anything to prevent this Bill becoming law this Session. I do hope they will see that this first instalment of legislation for the agricultural community of this country is carried, because I think the wants and the wishes of that community are quite as much entitled to consideration as those of any other class. By carrying this measure during the present Session a grievance will be abolished; and it appears to me, Sir, that the abolition of grievances is peculiarly the duty and mission of the Party who now occupy these Benches. Two years have elapsed since that memorable night when a former Conservative Administration was defeated, because there was no mention of this very measure in the programme of the Session. I think it will be a triumph that this Party is now to be entrusted with this measure, and with the personal settlement of this once vexed question. The delay in bringing the matter forward was not of our seeking. I do not think Her Majesty's Ministers can be blamed for not bringing this matter forward earlier in the Session. The state of Ireland, and the time demanded by Irish Representatives, prevented this and many other measures of social and domestic reform receiving the attention of the House; but I can assure the Government, and I hope I shall not be considered presumptuous in doing so, that they will receive the cordial and enthusiastic support of hon. Members representing not only rural, but urban constituencies as well, if they will use their influence for the passing of this Bill during the present Session, and I look forward with confidence and interest to yet other measures for relieving the agricultural and the farming classes from the result of that depression, and from those incidents of taxation from which they are alike suffering. Some reference has been made—I think it was by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt)—to one of the details of the Bill which can scarcely commend itself to the favourable notice of the municipal boroughs of England, for they will naturally prefer that their own Corporation, whom they elect and control, should have the power of setting this Bill in motion, and of determining all questions as to ways and means. In my own constituency, to which I have already referred, the working classes, through the intervention and the efforts of the Mayor, have secured very valuable plots of land for allotments. But, on the other hand, I fully admit that there should be a multiplication of authorities with powers of purchase. I hope the Members of Her Majesty's Government, when formulating their scheme for county government, may be enabled to secure the due representation on the County Boards of the various Municipal Corporations in the county area. It may seem strange that upon this occasion—the first upon which I have addressed the House—I should have ventured to intrude myself upon the notice of the House on a subject in which my constituents are but slightly interested, yet I thought the House would accord me their indulgence while I made these few remarks, because I know from personal observation the very great benefits of the allotments system in town and country, and because I feel that any measure which directly or indirectly gives the working classes, whether in town or country, increased interest in the land must be beneficial as tending to point out to them by personal experience how great are the dangers and how heavy are the responsibilities to those who seek to cultivate the land for profit and support. Such a measure as this will also, I think, prove to the labourer that the price of produce must have some influence and some weight in regulating and fixing the wages paid to him and his class; and it will, I hope, open his eyes to the great danger of foreign competition, and also to the wisdom and necessity of encouraging and increasing, as far as possible, the home supply of food. I hope hon. Members will forgive me for venturing to take up their time; and, in conclusion, I repeat my appeal to Her Majesty's Government to leave no stone unturned, to use their best endeavours to secure, during the present Session, the addition of this very valuable and most useful, and most essential measure to the Statute Book.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): I can assure the hon. Gentleman the Member for Salisbury (Mr. Hulse) that Her Majesty's Government will most certainly use their very best endeavours in order to pass this Bill. I trust we may rely upon the assistance of both sides of the House to accomplish that result, and, in passing, I hope I may be allowed to congratulate the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Hulse) both on the temper, and the form, and the substance of the speech which he has just delivered. The Government will not only do their best to press forward this Bill, but to give effect to it. The hon. Member for Cirencester (Mr. Winterbotham) spoke of this Bill as a sham. I prefer to take in this matter the opinion of the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham (Mr. Jesse Collings), who is, I think, a greater authority even than my hon. Friend the Member for Cirencester upon a Bill of this kind, and in the judgment of the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham this is a Bill which well deserves the support of the House. Now, I shall leave the criticism upon the various suggestions which have been made with regard to the details of this Bill to my right hon. Friend the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) who is in charge of the measure, but I trust the House will give me its indulgence for a few moments, if I intervene in this debate, to reply to the challenge made to me by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt). I think I almost owe it to the House to reply to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman. I have a kind of feeling that he rather likes personal questions, as he forces them on, on every occasion he can, and I had a profound conviction which has not been falsified by the event that when he was so pressing to have the Bill brought on at an earlier hour it was because he had got a great speech ready in which he was going, not to discuss the advantages which would result to the agricultural labourer from this Bill, but in which he would be able to pose, after his manner, as the Representative of consistency in this House, while charging other Gentlemen with every inconsistency. I am afraid I am bound to waste a minute or two of the time of the House in replying to the right hon. Gentleman, and I only trust his example will not be followed by any other hon. Members. The hon. Member for Cirencester spent a very large portion of the time which he took up with his speech in an account of personal considerations, and apologized when he came to the details of the Bill. After consuming a considerable time with personal questions, he said—"Well, I think I ought to say a few words upon the details of the Bill." It appears to me it would be better to discuss the Bill itself than to discuss the previous declarations of other Members of the House. I am prepared to meet the challenge of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby. He takes a deep interest in the natural history of my alleged conversion, and so he is anxious to know what can have induced me to be converted upon the principle of compulsion which is introduced into the Bill. He asks whether I have been converted upon 24 hours' notice. The right hon. Gentleman thinks that if a man has held principles for two years, he has held them for a very long time. According to the standard of the right hon. Gentleman, if men adhere to views for two years together they may be considered consistent politicians.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: I said this question was started two years ago.

MR. GOSCHEN: This question was started in 1883. In 1883 this question was brought before the House, and the right hon. Gentleman, who was then in Office, allowed the House to be counted out. In 1885, during the Election, he was a convert to the system, and a warm and enthusiastic convert; but when he came into Office again, as has been pointed out by the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham, the question was dropped. [SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: No, no!] Now, I will be perfectly frank with the House on this subject. In the speech to which the right hon. Gentleman alluded I stated my objection to the principle of compulsion. I stated that I thought it was far better that individuals should continue to perform their duties than that they should be compelled by the State to perform their duties. I hold that opinion still. If in this Bill there is the principle of compulsion, and if I have assented to it as a Member of Her Majesty's Government, I have assented to it because it is impossible any single Member of the Government can carry out his own views upon every possible question, and not because I have been converted with regard to the principle. I am not one of those who can use such a canting phrase as to say they have found salvation. I do not wish to minimize the views which I hold, but right hon. Gentlemen opposite, and all hon. Members of the House, must know that it is perfectly impossible that every individual can carry his views in every possible respect. I bow to the decision of the House in general, to the views of hon. Members who sit upon this side of the House, and who are in favour of the principle of compulsion, and I believe they will prefer that I should boldly stand here and say I retain my individual opinion in regard to the principle of compulsion, rather than that I should profess to be converted under the exigencies of the situation. It appears to me that is a more honest and fair way of dealing with the House than to profess sudden conversion. At the same time, I have never been otherwise than favourable to allotments in themselves, though I may differ from some hon. Members as to the best method of multiplying them. Now, what happened when the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham introduced his measure relating to small holdings and allotments? In the speech which I made on that occasion, I expressed the opinion which I hold to this day, and which I am glad to see embodied in the Bill before the House—namely, that the promotion of the system of allotments is of the greatest possible interest to the agricultural labourer, and to the agricultural interest generally. I declared my adhesion to the principle of allotments, and I said I believed, as I believe now, that all the evidence was in favour of the extension of that system. One of the very reasons I gave against compulsion was that the process of giving allotments was going forward at a great pace. The voluntary system was at work, and was working, I do not say with sufficient rapidity, yet with considerable rapidity. I trust that the time may not be far distant when every labourer will have an allotment, though I think that the principle laid down by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Cirencester is somewhat dangerous. The hon. Gentleman says it is not a question of expediency that every labourer should have an allotment, but it is a question of right. Now, considering how agricultural labourers may multiply, I should like to know how right hon. Gentlemen opposite, who cheered the sentiment that every labourer has a right to an allotment, are afterwards, with the limited land at their disposal, going to carry out the principle they advocate? It is the desire of the House—it is the desire of both Parties in the House—that every agricultural labourer should, if possible, have an allotment, and this Bill is honestly intended to carry out that object. I have frankly told the House I am not in favour of the principle of compulsion; but, having accepted it in this Bill, I, as well as every other Member of the Government, am anxious that this Bill should not be a sham, but should be a reality, and that every agricultural labourer who looks forward with hope to the legislation which we are now passing may not be disappointed in his hope. The Government will be prepared to accept every suggestion or modification which, in their judgment, will give increased facilities and increased efficiency to the

Bill, which they propose with a great and deep desire that it may be effectual in meeting the desire of the agricultural classes for allotments.

SIR WALTER FOSTER (Derby, Ilkeston): Mr. Speaker, we are sorry on this side of the House that we have not had a more definite and explicit statement of conversion from the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He states he is still opposed to the principle of compulsion. I should like to know how many of his Colleagues are opposed to it? He accepts this Bill as a matter of expediency, and not of principle, and he dismisses the right of agricultural labourers to allotment of land on the ground that they may multiply.

MR. GOSCHEN: No. I said I did not admit the right—I admitted the expediency.

SIR WALTER FOSTER: The right hon. Gentleman admits the expediency, and denies the right because they may multiply.

MR. GOSCHEN: I am sure the hon. Gentleman has no wish to misrepresent me. I pointed out that if you once admit the right of an agricultural labourer to a certain amount of land, in the future, as they multiply, you may find it is absolutely impossible to meet the demand you admit.

SIR WALTER FOSTER: As to the agricultural labouring classes multiplying, it is well known that during the last 20 years they have rapidly decreased, and decreased to the extent, as I stated in a previous debate, of 30,000 a-year. I therefore think the contingency the right hon. Gentleman seeks to put before the House is not a contingency we need entertain. Now, I am very anxious that this Bill should not be a sham. I regret that in its present form it is likely to end in a sham. I shall vote for the second reading, not because I think the Bill is worthy of the Government which has introduced it, or worthy of the support given to it by the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham (Mr. Jesse Collings), but because I hope in Committee the Bill may be so amended that it may end in a reality. There are three or four points in connection with this Bill to which attention ought to be directed. First of all, I regard the Bill as extremely unsatisfactory on account of the nature and the size of the allotments it is proposed to give to the agricultural labourers. It has been contended by many people who have devoted a good deal of time to this matter that one acre of arable land or three acres of pasture land are the complements of each other, and that no Allotments Bill will be satisfactory which does not provide for three acres of pasture land. My hon. Friend the Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham spoke very properly and wisely of the necessity of providing milk for the children of the agricultural labourer. Milk is one of the prime essentials to the health and growth of a peasantry; but at the present time the English peasantry are deprived of it. Where in this Bill does my hon. Friend find a provision for giving the agricultural labourer milk? One acre of arable land will not do it, and three acres of pasture land, which would give it to him, are not in the Bill. Then as to the size of the allotments. I desire to call hon. Members' attention to the fact that the Bill says the maximum allotment is to be an acre; and the Government do not contemplate—if I may judge from the words used by the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) in introducing the Bill—that labourers shall get anything like that extent of land to cultivate. The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board pointed out that of the 386,000 allotments existing in the country 250,000 are under a quarter of an acre; and he said—"Probably the size of the great bulk of allotments under this Bill will not be greater than this quantity." Why, a quarter of an acre of land is not sufficient to alter the social and material condition of the agricultural labourer. We want them to have something that will aid them in increasing their scanty means and give them more comfort and food; therefore, any Bill which does not provide for a greater allotment than one acre, and which contemplates, in the opinion of those who introduced it, a quarter of an acre, is not a satisfactory conclusion to the great controversy which has been going on for so long a time. Then with reference to the Compulsory Clauses of this Bill. I cannot discuss them at any length. That is rather work for the Committee stage; but I may say that the Compulsory Clauses are cumbrous, and absolutely unworkable. By the time the agricultural labourer has grown old the necessary scheme will be passed through this House for giving him the allotment he applies for, at any rate, a very considerable time will elapse before the agricultural labourer applying for an allotment under this Biil will be able, in view of these unworkable clauses, to obtain one. Now, land will be purchased under this Bill, not, as was contemplated by my hon. Friend (Mr. Jesse Collings) in his Bill, at a price as between a willing vendor and a purchaser in the open market, but by some scheme of agreement or arbitration, which will add considerably to the purchase money, and thus necessitate an increase of the rent required from the labourer. I do not want to discuss this Bill at any length; but as I was in charge of the Bill in the last Parliament —the Bill of my hon. Friend—I may here distinctly repudiate on behalf of the Allotments Association and the gentlemen with whom I act in this matter, and acted then, any charge as to unfairness or breach of faith on the part of the then Government. We received most valuable assistance from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt). He spoke in favour of our Bill, and he promised us the support of the Government to get it carried, and we should have carried the second reading on that day, when my hon. Friend (Mr. Jesse Collings) was, unhappily, absent from the House, from causes to which I will not refer, but for the action of certain Gentlemen who now sit upon the Ministerial Benches. This, Sir, is known not only to the House, but throughout the country; it is well known that the then Government were perfectly willing to support the Bill, based as it was upon the lines and embracing the principles of the Amendment of my hon. Friend to the Address in the last Parliament. I hope this Bill will be carried; and let me say that we have seen some notable examples of progress in this matter. We have seen the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire (Mr. Chaplin) go through three stages of conversion. I have watched him advance with considerable interest. He was cool on the first occasion that my hon. Friend the Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham moved his Amendment to the Address; he got a little warmer afterwards when discussing the second reading of the Bill I introduced, but now he has become quite warm in favour of allotments. I congratulate the right hon. Gentleman.

Mr. CHAPLIN: I actually moved the rejection of the hon. Gentleman's Bill. I do not know whether he calls that getting a little warmer in its favour.

Sir WALTER FOSTER: I did not refer to the right hon. Gentleman's action in moving rejection of the Bill of which I had charge. The warmth to which I referred was his warmth in reference to doing something for the agricultural labourer in the shape of allotments, and I congratulate him on having a much higher opinion of Mr. Joseph Arch, now that gentleman is out of the House, than he had when he was in the House. Mr. Joseph Arch described the Bill which the right hon. Gentleman introduced as not worth the paper it was written on. I have no doubt if he were here he would be able to take care of himself; but, in his absence, I venture to call that fact to the attention of the right hon. Gentleman. We wish for reform, and, looking at the matter from the point of view of the agricultural labourer, for whom we are more or less able to speak, we congratulate the Government on their conversion to the principle of compulsion. I wish they had been converted more generously, and had accepted the principle more largely. I can, however, understand why they do not accept the principle more generously. It was only in the last debate upon this question of allotments that the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Local Government Board—the Member for Devizes (Mr. Long)—distinctly affirmed that in nine cases out of 10 where labourers wanted allotments, and where the land was suitable, they could get them at a fair rent. I can quite understand Gentlemen who utter and believe such a sentiment when it suits them are not very anxious to make the Compulsory Clauses of this Bill as wide and generous as they might be.

Mr. BROADHURST (Nottingham, W.): We have witnessed to-night a very extraordinary performance on the part of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr.

Goschen). He rose, professedly agreeing with this Bill, and expressing his determination, so far as it was possible for him, to see that the Bill was passed this Session. But, before he sat down, he made it perfectly clear he was opposed to the only part of the Bill which is of the least possible value to the labourers, and that is that part of the Bill which affirms the principle that compulsion shall be applied if necessary to provide the labourers with allotments. It is a most extraordinary position which the right hon. Gentleman occupies upon this question. He strongly opposed compulsion, when he thought there was no question of the expulsion from Office of the Tory Government; but when it is necessary to support compulsion in order to retain the Tory Government in Office he supports it. A more extraordinary confession of weakness and want of consistency has seldom been witnessed in the House. Then, as to the complaint of the late Government in respect to this allotments question, the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham (Mr. Jesse Collings) can scarcely remember the facts of the case when he brings this serious charge against his late Colleagues. The Government of the day did all they could to support the Bill, and my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby made a strong speech in support of it. [*Laughter.*] Hon. Gentlemen laugh, but surely we have our recollection, and the opportunity of refreshing our memory of what occurred. I remember distinctly that the right hon. Gentleman did make an earnest speech in support of the second reading of the Bill, and hon. and right hon. Gentlemen who rose as champions of the cause to-day are those who on that occasion defeated the Bill by talking it out on a Wednesday afternoon. I confess I was rather surprised at the enthusiasm of the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham in support of the Bill. True, its aim and proposal is to provide allotments for labourers, but I remember that the great point of my hon. Friend in this class of legislation was not so much allotments as small holdings. He, times out of number, declared that legislation of this kind would altogether fail unless it provided for small holdings of from 20 to 60 acres in extent.

MR. JESSE COLLINGS: I am sorry to interrupt my hon. Friend, but indeed I never said anything of the kind, or anything like it. I have always said that allotments are quite distinct from small holdings.

MR. BROADHURST: I shall avoid, if possible, drifting into that very painful position we were in the other night with reference to the truth of statements made by one or the other Member of the House, but I am sure my hon. Friend will scarcely maintain his denial if I remind him of many conversations we had on the subject before the Bill saw daylight in this House. He supports the main proposals of the Bill to-night, amid the unanimous cheers of that side of the House, which I could not help contrasting with the noises and interruptions from that side which accompanied his speeches a few years back——

MR. JESSE COLLINGS: From this side, too.

MR. BROADHURST: I cannot congratulate my hon. Friend on the changed relations between him and the Party opposite. His mind to-night was running on the lines of his original proposal. In sentence after sentence he spoke of the importance of milk as if this Bill were going to supply milk to the agricultural labourers. Sir, there is no provision to provide the proverbial pigeon's milk to those who were once his friends in the agricultural districts. He was rebuked somewhat by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire (Mr. Chaplin), and warned that relying on his deep and earnest friendship he must not presume to return to his doctrine of three acres and a cow, or he would again find the right hon. Gentleman his foe. That was the meaning of the right hon. Gentleman's speech, if it had any meaning in it. What is the value of the Bill except the one principle it proposes to establish of compulsory acquisition of land? The right hon. Gentleman defended the provision of Quarter Sessions as a very proper institution as a Court of Appeal in matters of this kind, because country gentlemen are friends of allotments. But if country gentlemen are the advocates and friends of allotments, whence the necessity for this Bill? Why have they not provided these allotments?

MR. CHAPLIN: The hon. Member will excuse me—I said the majority of them.

MR. BROADHURST: Oh! the majority of them. Well, I very much doubt it, and take the liberty of differing with him as to a body of gentlemen with whom, of course, he is much better acquainted than I am. But there is greater proof regarding their general relations to the labourers of the country in the possession of hon. Members of the House other than the right hon. Gentleman. Do labourers approve of Quarter Sessions as the appeal on the Allotments Question? Will you go to your constituents and assert there in the face of a meeting of agricultural labourers that Quarter Sessions is the institution of all others that to which the friends of the agricultural labourers would surrender them, they having been through all time their advocates and defenders? For all I know, the gentlemen who constitute Quarter Sessions may have undergone a conversion as sudden as that of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He undergoes a conversion in the course of a few hours, and of course we cannot say but Quarter Sessions are equally susceptible to similar influences. If it be so, I am glad to find it so, for better late than never. I should like to know what the right hon. Gentleman in charge of the Bill thinks of a provision that, as I read it, would lead to this extraordinary result. Town Councils would, under certain conditions, have to go to Quarter Sessions to ask permission of Quarter Sessions to put the machinery of the Bill in force. Will the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division go to Birmingham and tell the Town Council of that town that it is their duty to acknowledge the superiority of Quarter Sessions; that they must bow to their footstool? Will he undertake to make such a recommendation to the Town Council? We know the opinion of Quarter Sessions respecting members of Town Councils. I was reading only a few minutes back the references of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford to the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham, whom he called a Birmingham Alderman presuming to understand about allotments and agricultural affairs. What a lovely change of atmosphere in the relationship of the parties to-night! Now the Birmingham Alderman is a wise statesman, the apostle of truth and reason, and, having abandoned all his Socialistic proposals and dangerous intentions, is admitted a repentant sinner into the camp of Quarter Sessions. I hope my hon. Friend may not live to regret the day when he was received into this distinguished company with such general acclamation. But I will not detain the House at greater length. [*Cries of* "Time!"] This is quite a new practice, so far as I understand, that Bills of this importance are to pass through their second reading under constant and irritating calls of "Time" from hon. Gentlemen opposite. When they have had a longer experience of the House, they will learn, perhaps, that debates on the second reading are not always loss of time, but facilitate the future progress of the Bill through Committee, and on a measure of this importance we claim to express our opinion, and to tell the House and the country our reasons for objecting to some of its contents, our reason for asserting that the Bill is, to a great extent, a sham, and only admits the bare skeleton of the principle on which it should be founded. I am afraid I might be out of Order if I were to say it is merely the building of a platform for speeches during the Recess to agricultural constituencies. We fear, and we have reason for believing, that it is not the intention of Her Majesty's Government to press this measure forward through Committee, and make it law this Session. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] Well, I do not take the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer as an authority; he no more likes the principle of the Bill now than he did 18 months ago; but he accepts the Bill as an alternative to leaving Office. I value very little the friendship towards the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer under such circumstances. I want to know from the right hon. Gentleman, who is responsible, whether there is a serious intention of pressing the Bill forward, or whether we are only having a debate to-night for the purpose of "marking time," and to give the Government the opportunity of claiming in future elections the credit of good intentions, and to talk of the wonderful things they had intended to do if they had had the opportunity, and the Opposition had allowed the Bill to pass without debate or criticism though its second reading? There is only one section of the Bill to which I will now refer, and it is a matter in which hon. Members who know anything of it will agree with my objection. I refer to Sub-section 5 of Clause 6. That section prohibits the tenant of an allotment from erecting any building whatever. If that is to be the case, then the Bill will be a great sham—indeed, a perfect delusion, and absolutely useless. It could only have been proposed by people in utter ignorance of the whole question, and the interest of the tenant of the holding. You render it utterly impracticable and useless to the labourers who are to obtain allotments under this Bill. No allotment of three-quarters of an acre, half an acre, or a quarter of an acre situated half, or even a quarter of a mile, from the cottage of the cultivator will be of use if it is to be held without the right of erecting a shed of any kind, not to speak of a pigstye or shelter for a donkey or pony. How is the cultivator to carry backwards and forwards all the implements necessary for the successful cultivation of his small holding? Where can he store his seeds, and many other things required in his daily work? Where can he retire in stress of weather? What encouragement is given him to spend time on his holding if, when he gets there, he has not an inch of cover for himself and the implements he may require for cultivation? I hope this clause will be amended. I shall place Amendments on the Paper, having the object in view of permitting, under certain conditions, the erection of some kind of building or sheds for the purposes I have indicated upon holdings of this description. We know that the allotment system is most successful when the land adjoins the cottage in which the cultivator lives. This is well known to anyone with experience of allotment or garden cultivation, and if a man is not allowed to erect even a store shed, then the thing is altogether absurd, and a sham. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will accept an Amendment in that direction. If he does, so far as I am concerned, although the Bill requires amendment in other directions, still I shall vote for the second reading tonight, in so far that it asserts a just and important principle, and I sincerely hope there will be no Division against this stage.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): The hon. Gentleman the Member for West Nottingham (Mr. Broadhurst) has asked me very pointedly whether the Government have an intention to pass the Bill through all its stages this Session? I do not know whether the hon. Gentleman was in the House when the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer was speaking?

MR. BROADHURST: Yes.

MR. RITCHIE: Then he must have heard my right hon. Friend say most distinctly that the Government intended to use all their influence to pass the Bill this Session. But the hon. Gentleman does not believe the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, because he opposed a Bill——

MR. BROADHURST: I should be sorry to be open to the charge of having expressed any want of belief in what the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer said. What I said was that I should require an assurance from some other authority, seeing that the right hon. Gentleman was opposed to the main principle of the Bill.

MR. RITCHIE: The hon. Gentleman puts a very pointed question to me, which has been previously answered by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer. To that answer he makes reply that the right hon. Gentleman is opposed to the Bill. If that does not imply that he places no reliance upon what the right hon. Gentleman said I do not know what language means. The hon. Gentleman need have no apprehension. The Government have introduced this Bill with the full intention of pushing it forward into law, and they will welcome the assistance of the hon. Gentleman, or any other assistance that will conduce to that end. The Government are grateful for the promises of support from hon. and right hon. Gentlemen on the other side of the House. I must say some of the promises of support were rather of a halting nature, mixed up with a great deal of criticism, and mainly criticism not of the Bill, but of what hon. and right hon. Gentlemen are pleased to call the inconsistencies of Members of the Government who promote the Bill. [*Cries* *of* "No, no!"] Well, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) and the hon. Member for the Cirencester Division of Gloucester (Mr. Winterbotham) were, above all others, loud with charges against Members of the Government for inconsistency.

Mr. WINTERBOTHAM: The only Member with whom I concerned myself was the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire (Mr. Chaplin), and he is not a Member of the Government.

Mr. RITCHIE: I think the hon. Gentleman had something to say of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer and his change of opinion.

Mr. WINTERBOTHAM: No; I had not.

Mr. RITCHIE: I am bound to say that of all hon. Members of the House the charge of inconsistency comes with the least grace from the hon. and right hon. Gentlemen I have mentioned. Certainly, if a knowledge of the art qualifies Gentlemen to criticize action of this kind I must acknowledge the claim of those I refer to. I fancy the hon. Gentleman the Member for Cirencester as well as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby might have a few not very pleasant things said of them as to their want of consistency in many matters. Well, the great brunt of the attack of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby was upon the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer. My right hon. Friend can defend himself much better than I can; but I say this of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, which he could not say for himself, that there is no man in the House or the country less open to the charge of inconsistency. No man has made greater sacrifices for the sake of consistency than the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I am not going to waste the time of the House in referring to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby, three parts of which was a wrangling on consistency and demonstrated his want of it; I will take advantage of the few minutes wherein I can trespass on the attention of the House at this late hour by dealing with a few of the criticisms addressed to the Bill itself. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby attacked the noble Lord at the head of the Government (the Marquess of Salisbury) for saying something which he did not say. He attacks my noble Friend for having, as he said, said in a speech in the House of Lords that the Government had no intention of proceeding with a Bill of this kind until the new Local Authority had been set up. Now, my noble Friend never said anything of the kind. He undoubtedly did say—I understood him to say, and it is what we all say—that it would be far better to set up the new authority before introducing this Bill. He criticized certain of the authorities who might have charge of the carrying out of the Bill, and he went on to say—"It would be much better if we could set up the new Local Authority." Well, I believe we most of us would agree in that; but my noble Friend never said a word to induce the House to believe that there was no intention of introducing this Bill. He said—"I am not going to say what the Bill of the Government will be;" and he pointed out distinctly that the Government intended to introduce a Bill on the subject, and have not Members of the Government in this House repeatedly said again and again that the Government did intend to introduce the Bill? It has been our intention from the commencement of the Session, and we have never departed one hair's breadth from that determination.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: Perhaps I may be allowed to say that what Lord Salisbury said at the end of his speech was—

> "I confess I should have preferred that we had been able to pass our Local Government Bill before we dealt with this question; for I doubt very much whether, with the present organization of the counties, we can do much with it, in the shape of finding a fit authority to administer the measure."—(3 *Hansard*, [316] 244.)

I cannot find in Lord Salisbury's speech at that time—16th June—any indication whatever of an intention to introduce this Bill.

Mr. RITCHIE: Not a word the right hon. Gentleman has quoted is inconsistent with what I have said. Distinctly my noble Friend, and all of us, thought and said it would be better to deal with local government before introducing a Bill on allotments. In the first part of that speech my noble Friend speaks distinctly about a Bill the Government had; and at that time there was a Bill the Government intended to introduce.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: Why did you not introduce it in the House of Lords?

MR. RITCHIE: Because we thought, on consideration, that it was better that this House should deal with it first. Bills were being constantly passed through the House of Lords, while in the House of Commons they were blocked. We thought that a Bill introduced in the House of Commons had a better chance of passing this Session than if it were introduced in the House of Lords. That is the sole reason why we thought it better to introduce the Bill in the House of Commons. It is now before the House, and has been freely criticized. In the first place, the machinery for the Bill has been very much questioned — the authority for putting the Bill into force. The hon. Member for Cirencester (Mr. Winterbotham) was hard upon us for adopting the authority of the Board of Guardians. I will not repeat what he said, but he expressed his entire and utter want of confidence in the Boards of Guardians as the machinery for putting the Bill into operation. But he did not tell us what machinery he proposes.

MR. WINTERBOTHAM: The Vestry.

MR. RITCHIE: Well, I should have thought of all the authorities possible to set up the least efficient authority would be the Vestry. What has been done in recent legislation in reference to Vestries? Has it not been the policy of recent years to take away from Vestries the power they have in dealing with such things as water and sewage and other matters, giving the power to larger authorities, Boards of Guardians in rural districts, Local Boards in urban districts? The whole policy has been to limit, not to extend, the area of the Vestry authority. And let me tell the House the constitution of the Vestry has that fault which the hon. Member found with the Board of Guardians—their election is not by one vote one man, but by plural votes, the same as the Guardians; and a body more likely to be interested, more open to the influence of the landowner, and adverse to the interest of the labourers, it is impossible to conceive. Since when has the hon. Member for Cirencester changed his mind on this point? I have here the Bill of the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham, and I think I shall find on the back of it the name of the hon. Gentleman. Yes; I do. And what is the authority set up in this Bill of the hon. Member for Bordesley? The Board of Guardians! Sir, the hon. Gentleman actually put his name on the back of a Bill which in his view was a sham!

MR. WINTERBOTHAM: I am sorry to interrupt the right hon. Gentleman; but may I point out that when I put my name on the back of the Bill, and when I spoke in support of the second reading, I was careful to say that I supported it on account of its principle of compulsion, but that I differed from it in regard to detail and machinery.

MR. RITCHIE: Yes; but what the hon. Member said to-night was that the setting up of the Board of Guardians into an authority converted the Bill into a "sham," so that the hon. Member is, at least, convicted of this inconsistency—that he gave the great authority of his name to a Bill which, in his opinion, set up machinery which would render it a sham. Now, what are these Boards of Guardians? They are the authorities who transact the whole business of local government in rural districts. They have complete control over all matters of local concern within the rural districts; and yet you would say that for a purpose of this kind—a minor purpose of this kind—you have no confidence in the body to whom you entrust all the machinery for governing your rural districts. It may be true that there ought to be some reform in our Local Bodies there and elsewhere. I do not say that the Boards of Guardians are incapable of reform. Perhaps when I have the honour of bringing forward the Local Government Bill, hon. Members will see that I think the Boards of Guardians are capable of some reform; but I should be sorry to say that, constituted as they are, they are not entitled to our confidence, and are not entirely capable of carrying out the powers which we propose to confer upon them by this Bill to the entire satisfaction of the rural communities. But the Boards of Guardians are not the only authority who have to carry out this Bill. There are the Town Councils and the Urban Boards in each district. An hon. Member—I forget who it was, but I rather think that it was the hon. Gentleman himself—criticized the figures which I gave in connection with these allotments when I introduced the Bill. Well, he has in no way attempted to disprove the figures which I then gave; they were correct; but the hon. Member said that I only took into account the number of the agricultural labourers. I beg the hon. Member's pardon; I distinctly said that, in my opinion, it was a mistake to suppose that it was only the agricultural labourers who were interested in this matter, and that, in my opinion, the artizans in our towns were as greatly interested in it as the agricultural labourers in our rural districts. I said I looked with the utmost confidence to the great things that were to be done by a measure of this kind to our urban population. I believe it may have an effect upon them as great, if not greater, than upon the agricultural population. I look with great hope on the effect it may have in raising the character of our labouring urban population. Then objection is taken to what is called its "cumbrous machinery for compulsion." But, with the exception which I am about to state, the machinery is precisely the same that was adopted in the Bill of the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham, which was backed by the hon. Gentleman himself—that is to say, that where compulsory powers are required in the Bill, the Local Authorities had to apply to the Local Government Board for a Provisional Order, which had to be confirmed by Parliament. Well, now, we have not proposed in this Bill that the application for a Provisional Order should be made to the Local Government Board, for reasons which I stated in introducing the Bill. We believe that in proposing to set up a great County Authority throughout England it was desired that there should be a considerable amount of decentralization and extension of local self-government. I thought that in taking away, as it were, the power which the Local Government Board alone possesses at present, and issuing Provisional Orders and putting them into the hands of an elected assembly in the county, we were giving a large and valuable extension of the powers of local self-government. It is quite true that during the time which will intervene between now and the setting up of this authority we say that the Quarter Sessions should be the authority which should issue this Provisional Order. An authority cannot issue a Provisional Order to itself; it must make an application to some other authority for the issue of a Provisional Order. Well, we say that when the County Authority is elected the question should be left to them, and they should issue the Provisional Orders. Objection is taken to the Quarter Sessions, and upon this point I may say at once that, so far as the Government are concerned, they attach no particular value to that provision, and if it is agreeable to the House, and the House would desire it, the Government are perfectly ready to strike out the Quarter Sessions, and to make the application an application to the Local Government Board until the setting up of the County Authority. It is a part of what I consider the valuable principle of this Bill that when the County Authority is set up, then it should be to that authority that the application should be made. An hon. Friend behind me wished to know whether or not boroughs will be represented on the County Authorities? Of course, boroughs will be represented. It would be impossible to conceive a County Authority on which boroughs would not be represented. I cannot conceive that there would be any loss of dignity in a Local Authority going to a superior authority to complete an operation under this Bill. So far as the interposition of Parliament is concerned, I may inform the House that out of the 110 Bills presented to Parliament for the confirmation of Provisional Orders during the past five years by the Local Government Board in regard to the purchase of land, 108 have passed unopposed, and the House will therefore see that the machinery we set up for the compulsory purchase of land, which is the machinery in existence for the purchase of land of every kind, is an easy and expeditious machinery. As I have said, I have no doubt that the objection which is held in some quarters, especially in boroughs, to conferring these powers on Quarter Sessions is a justifiable one; therefore, we are prepared to do as I say. A good deal has been said about the question of the price at which the allotments that

I spoke of when I introduced the Bill are let at present. The hon. Member for the Cirencester Division of Gloucester said that the price paid for allotments is often unreasonable, and that our Bill provides no means whatever of getting rid of that difficulty. Surely the hon. Gentleman cannot have read the Bill carefully, or he would have seen that one of its principles is that the allotments shall be let at the ordinary agricultural price of the land. In the very first page of the Bill, while we base the whole fabric of the measure upon voluntary agreement, so far as possible, we distinctly say that the Local Authority have got to satisfy themselves that such holdings can be obtained at a reasonable rent by voluntary agreement. So that all that allotment holders would have to do if the land was let to them at an unreasonable rent, would be to give up the allotments they at present hold, and see that the Local Authority finds them other allotments at a reasonable price. One of the principles upon which the Bill is founded is that no labourer, after the passing of the Bill, shall be called upon to pay more than a fair rent for agricultural land. Now, something has been said about the size of the allotments. I have been found great fault with, because in introducing the Bill I said that I believed a large number of these allotments would not exceed a quarter of an acre. I may be right or wrong, but I cannot see the foundation for any complaint which the hon. Gentleman who made it could possibly have, when we distinctly provide in this Bill that Local Authorities may give allotments up to the size of an acre. I have not heard any hon. Gentleman on either side of the House contend that, so far as arable land is concerned, one acre is not fully ample and sufficient. I know that there are certain cases in which an acre ought to be given, and I should be sorry in giving such large powers as we give the Local Authorities under this Bill to tie their hands and say—"Under no circumstances shall you give an acre of land in an allotment." We may hope that Local Authorities will be reasonable and will not give an undue quantity of land to a person who may not be able to cultivate it. We thought it best to draw a wide limit in the matter. Now, as to the question of three acres—I was going to say "three acres and a cow." I very much sympathize with the arguments used as to extending the Bill so as to provide some tenants who may wish for it with three acres of pasture land; but I am bound to say that that is a matter which will be much better dealt with by voluntary agreement than by any compulsory arrangement as to purchase. I cannot think that in pasture counties there will be any difficulty in the Local Authority acting between the land owners of the persons desiring to have allotments of that kind when they are required; but hon. Members will see that the application of a principle of this kind must have a very limited scope. A man may take a piece of arable land with his family, and without any capital at all may proceed to cultivate it, and benefit himself very considerably. But it is a very different matter when you come to grass land. You must have your cow. It would be necessary in providing the three acres for a labourer to keep a cow, that that man should be able to scrape up enough money, not only to buy a cow, but in the event of the cow dying to protect himself against a position of something like absolute ruin.

An hon. MEMBER: They have insurance clubs.

MR. RITCHIE: Then we will say nothing further on that point except this, that the labourer who desires to have a grass holding will be obliged to have capital before he can invest it in the purchase of a cow, and that therefore the number who would avail themselves of such a provision would be extremely limited. I cannot conceive how in pasture counties there would be any difficulty in a labourer who has capital not being able to provide himself with sufficient pasture land to keep a cow, and I may say with reference to any Amendment on that head or any other Amendment which any hon. Member may bring forward, we shall give them every consideration. Several questions have been put to me with reference to Clause 6, which prohibits building on the allotments. I frankly acknowledge that the building I had in my mind was a building in which the allotment holder might live, and it does not occur to me that there ought to be any difficulty whatever in allowing such modest buildings as have been suggested by hon. Members to be raised on the allotments. We are anxiously desirous that this Bill should be a complete Bill. We are anxiously desirous that nothing should be wanting in this Bill to make these allotments a blessing to those who are fortunate enough to obtain them, and I can assure hon. Members who have spoken about buildings that I do not believe myself that there will be any difference between us when we come to discuss this matter. Well, Sir, I do not think I have anything more to say. I do not know whether I have missed any point. The discussion has been rather discursive and the greater part of it has been taken up with diatribes and incriminations. I hope I have taken up the most important points, and that I have so far explained the course of the Government as to get the House to see that we are extremely desirous of considering very carefully and as favourably as we can any Amendments which will not strike at the principle of the Bill. We rely confidently on the assistance of the House in passing the Bill into law during this Session. I hope hon. Members will confine the Amendments they intend to propose in Committee within reasonable limits, because it must be perfectly obvious to hon. Members that however desirous the Government may be of passing the Bill at this period of the Session a great deal must depend upon the action of the House itself. We believe from the disposition the House seems to be in at this moment that there ought to be no difficulty in passing the Bill this Session. Once more I assure hon. Members that it is the earnest desire of the Government to pass the Bill, and that in their opinion there is no measure before the House at the present time which is of greater importance and which is more desirable to pass quickly so that its provisions may come into operation with as little delay as possible.

Mr. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.W.): I wish to say with regard to this measure that I do not believe it will do any good whatever seeing that it comes from the other side of the House. I do not believe indeed that any Bill framed by the occupants of either of the Front Benches would do the slightest good even if it extended every allotment to three acres, and associated with it a cow or even a crocodile. My reason for saying that is that such a measure as this is only tinkering with a system which is both doomed and damned. I, however, congratulate both sides of the House upon having to-night taken the first step in that reforming path which must inevitably lead to the nationalization of the land.

Viscount WOLMER (Hants, Petersfield): I do not wish to intervene between the House and a Division for any length of time; but I should like to make a few remarks to the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) in the hope that he may consider the suggestions I throw out between now and the Committee stage of the Bill. I would join with other Members in pressing upon him the desirability of reconsidering the proposal with regard to Boards of Guardians, for I fear that the Local Authority will sometimes find themselves placed in an awkward position. We are glad to hear what he has said with regard to buildings on allotments; but I wish to point out to him that the principle of this Bill, of which I personally approve, is that the rents of these allotments should not be charity rents, but should be such as will recoup the legitimate expenses of the working of this Act. But the far too complicated machinery of the measure, in my opinion, lays a terrible trap for the Boards of Guardians. Suppose the application of the measure is opposed, all the expenses of defending the course the Guardians wish to adopt will fall upon the rates. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] Yes; but under this Bill they will. I am, at any rate, glad to hear that point contested. Notwithstanding the denial of the hon. Members, I believe that such expenses will fall upon the rates, and, if they do, how can you arrange with any labourer for the payment of a rent fixed so as to cover the expenses of defending a private Bill? I am glad to hear that it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government to provide that the rent of these allotments shall be the fair agricultural rent, but I hope they will express it in the Bill—that after taking into account the expenses of the working of this Act the rent fixed shall be as far as possible the same as that paid by neighbouring farmers for neighbouring land. In the 7th section there is a valuable provision dealing with unexhausted improvements, but there is no direction as to how these unexhausted improvements are to be valued, or upon what scale compensation is to be given; and I would ask the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board to direct attention to that point so that there may be a clear expression upon it in the Act. I think I may fairly congratulate hon. Members on this side of the House with whom I am divided on the great question of the day on the action they have taken in this matter. I was rather alarmed lest they had changed their minds since they had voted 18 months ago on the Resolution of the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham (Mr. Jesse Collings). It is true that this measure meets with the approval of the right hon. Gentlemen the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) and that right hon. Gentleman is a very great man. But there is a greater than he, and that greater than he has spoken upon this subject since hon. Members supported that Resolution. That greater than he on one occasion alluded to "a certain Mr. Jesse Collings with certain doctrines about land which I, for my part, have never adopted." Well, if the Leader of my hon. Friends sitting around me has repudiated the doctrine adopted by him a few months previously it is only natural that we should feel some alarm lest his faithful followers had followed his example. Therefore, I may, I think, congratulate the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham that he has not lost those supporters whom he might perhaps have expected to lose.

Mr. STAVELEY HILL (Staffordshire, Kingswinford): I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned." —(*Mr. Staveley Hill.*)

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): I trust that this Motion will not be pressed, having regard to the late period of the Session, and to the fact the Bill is almost unanimously accepted in principle by the House. It is most important that we should get into the next stage of the Bill, so as to allow every hon. Gentleman who desires to say anything upon the clauses ample opportunity of doing so. I earnestly hope that the House will consent to the Bill being read a second time to-night.

Mr. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby): A great many people take deep interest in this subject, and necessarily, because it is a subject of very great importance. I know there are a great many hon. Members on the other side who take the same interest in the question that we do, and who are desirous of speaking upon it, but have been unable to do so. Whose fault is that? It is absolutely the fault of the Government. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] Well, they were appealed to night after night by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt), and by other right hon. Gentlemen sitting on the Front Bench beside him, to give full opportunity for a discussion; and they always declared that the state of Public Business would not allow them to make any arrangement with regard to the Bill. The right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury, in order to meet the exigencies of the Tory Party, wishes us to take a number of Bills without any discussion whatever. We are not prepared to assent to that. I have risen two or three times; and it is not my fault if I have not been called upon. No doubt it is perfectly right that I have not been called upon, and I have no complaint to make; but I do desire to have an opportunity of speaking. Will the right hon. Gentleman tell us whether, on the Motion to go into Committee on the Bill, we shall have an opportunity of speaking on the main question, and not merely upon the details.

Mr. W. H. SMITH: I should have been glad to afford every possible facility in my power; but it seems to me that the main principle of the Bill has been accepted by the House, and the question for hon. Members is now simply one of clauses. I have not heard a single objection to the principle of the Bill. I have heard objection made to the clauses, and I can only say that, as the House desires, as I understand it, that the Bill should be passed, I earnestly hope hon. Members will allow the present stage to be taken. If hon. Members desire to speak upon the Bill on the Motion for going into Committee, I shall make no objection.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT : I hope the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Kingswinford (Mr. Staveley Hill) will withdraw his Motion. Everyone, I think, must be anxious to see this Bill passed into law; but I certainly must say that I think the right hon Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury might have put the Bill down at an earlier hour—even as the first order—that being the position which I should have thought its importance deserved. I should have thought, in discussing a Bill of this kind, we ought to have had some power of discussing it as a whole. On both sides of the House there are Gentlemen who desire to make further observations on the Bill. It is too late, of course, to do that to-night; but if the right hon. Gentleman will bring on the Motion for going into Committee on the Bill at a moderately early hour on the next occasion, that, perhaps, will afford a sufficient opportunity to hon. Members to express their opinions.

Mr. W. H. SMITH : I certainly will do that.

Mr. STAVELEY HILL : I am always glad to accede to anything that falls from the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House. I, for one, take, perhaps, as great an interest in the subject of this Bill as any hon. Member in the House; and I wish for an opportunity of expressing a view with regard to proposals which I consider illusory and unjust. I withdraw my Motion.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Mr. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): I do not think this debate should close without a few words in further justification of the course the hon. Member for West Nottingham (Mr. Broadhurst) has taken in challenging the Government to say definitely whether they intend to proceed with the Bill. The history of this measure during the Session is before this House and before the country, and it gives us fair reason for challenging the sincerity of the action of the Government on the matter. [*Cries of* "Divide!"] I insist, Sir, upon making my statement. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) quoted words used by Lord Salisbury in "another place," and I wish he had continued the quotation, because the words of the noble Lord absolutely support the contention of the hon. Member for West Nottingham that the Government, at the time Lord Dunraven's Bill was before the House of Lords, did not intend to proceed with the question of allotments during the present Session. The words in the speech of Lord Salisbury, which followed the words quoted by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby, were these—

> "One of the reasons why he was unwilling to introduce this subject as a separate question without waiting until the proposals of the Government with respect to Local Government were before Parliament, and in a fair way to acceptance, was that one of the most difficult problems connected with this question was the selection of an administrative authority."

I should like to ask the House whether these words, as given in *The Times* reports—which I have assumed to be correct, as we know that *The Times* reports are also the reports for *Hansard*—mean any more or less than this, that Lord Salisbury did not contemplate going on with this question until he had introduced, and practically carried, the Local Government Bill. I think that fact, and the fact that the Government changed its mind as soon as my hon. Friend the Member for the Spalding Division was returned, was significant. The late Government, in the person of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby, has been charged with inconsistency, and with a wish not to really deal honestly with the allotments question. They were most needlessly charged with having got into power on the Motion of the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham (Mr. Jesse Collings), and then with evading this question. But I would call the attention of the House and the country to this fact that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) invited the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) and the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham to take Office in his Government expressly to carry out that very policy, and therefore it is not the fact that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian and his Colleagues had no intention of dealing with the question. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham and his Friend deserted him and turned him out of power before he was able to carry out that policy. Sir, as I said, I heartily support the principle of this Bill. I welcome—and I welcome as a member of the committee of Liberal County Members who have carefully considered this Bill—the assurance of the right hon. Gentleman that he will favourably consider the Amendments we are about to lay upon the Table, and the Amendments that may come from the other side of the House. I hope that assurance will be carried out literally and fully, because I can assure him we agree largely with the sentiments expressed by the hon. Member for the Cirencester Division of Gloucester (Mr. Winterbotham) that we consider the Bill in its present form—if not a mere sham—is a skeleton that requires to have flesh and blood added to it to make it work, and we shall insist upon the Amendments we consider right; but I assure him we shall not persist in carrying the debates upon them to any undue length.

Original Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *To-morrow.*

MR. STAVELEY HILL: May I ask after what time the right hon. Gentleman will not take this Bill?

MR. W. H. SMITH: Not after 11 o'clock.

SUPPLY.—REPORT.

Order for Further Consideration of Postponed Resolution [8th August] read.

(10.) "That a sum, not exceeding £13,761, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1888, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Office of Her Majesty's Woods, Forests, and Land Revenues, and of the Office of Land Revenue Records and Inrolments."

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): I shall not detain the House for many moments; but I wish to call the attention of the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) to the question I wish to raise in connection with this postponed Vote. The Committee of Supply was placed in very considerable difficulty in discussing this Vote the other night, and I am sure that the right hon. Gentleman and the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) would not have sanctioned the difficulty in which the Committee was then placed. On the 28th February last this House ordered a Return giving full details of the income and expenditure in connection with this Department of the Woods and Forests, about which there has been considerable dissatisfaction for a considerable number of years, and though that Return was ordered on the 28th February, and only consists of three pages, that Return was not placed in the hands of Members until two days after the Vote was taken in Committee of Supply. I will not comment upon that, it carries its own story, because anyone who knows anything of the Accounts and of this Department knows that the Return could have been prepared, I was going to say in a few hours, but, at all events, in a few days; but to say that it takes five months to prepare a statement of the Accounts of the Woods and Forests is one of the severest condemnations of the Department, and it deserves the attention of the House. What I want to ask the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury is this. Twelve months ago the question of this Department was brought before Parliament. The then Chancellor of the Exchequer—the Leader of the House and Representative of the Conservative Government (Lord Randolph Churchill)—promised a Committee to inquire into the whole management of this Department. I did not move for the Committee at the commencement of this Session, as I thought the Royal Commission on Civil Service expenditure could grapple with this inquiry; but, as the right hon. Gentleman knows, we have devoted the whole of our attention this Session to other Departments, and I doubt if we can now make that searching inquiry, that strict Parliamentary investigation that it deserves; and without desiring to delay the House upon this Vote, though it was passed by the Committee in complete ignorance of the real state of the case, I wish to ask whether next Session the right hon. Gentleman will be disposed to grant a Select Committee for further inquiry into the funds and administration of this Department?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): The right hon. Gentleman gave me no Notice of the purport of the Question, and I am unable, therefore, to inform him of the facts of the case. I have no doubt he made an accurate representation of the promise made 12 months ago; but I should wish to look into the question, and in the course of a few days I will give an answer to the right hon. Gentleman.

Resolution *agreed to.*

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES ACT (1875) AMENDMENT (No. 3) BILL.—[BILL 353.]

(*Mr. Jackson, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

COMMITTEE.

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

DR. CLARK (Caithness): I beg to move the following New Clause, which is merely a qualification of the present Act:—

"Sub-sections (5) and (6), of section thirty, of the principal Act, are hereby repealed, and the following sub-sections substituted:—

"(5) No clerk nor collector shall be present at, or vote, or take any part in the proceedings of any meeting of the same;

"(6) At least one general meeting of the Society shall be held in every year to consider the annual return or balance sheet; any report of the Committee of management or managers; any amendment of the rules of the society, of which due notice has been given; to elect the office bearers; and transact such business as the rules may require or permit; such meeting shall be open to any adult member of the society, except those disqualified by sub-section (5), or where the rules determine that the members shall be represented by delegates.

"In sub-section (7) of section of the principal Act, at end, after the words 'carried on,' insert the words 'where the day, hour, or place of an annual or other periodical meeting is fixed by the rules, notice of the objects of the meeting, and of any proposed amendments to the rules, shall be published in any newspaper in general circulation in every county where the society carries on business, or delivered to the members by the collectors, at least fourteen days before the day appointed for such meeting. Where the members are represented by delegates at the annual or other periodical meetings, the notice shall be given at least one week before the meeting to elect delegates. Any adult member may give notice of motion or proposed amendment of the rules in writing, not less than fourteen days before the period fixed for giving notice of the meeting or its business.'

"Sub-section (8) of the same section, the words 'or annual return in the form prescribed by section 14,' shall be inserted after the words 'balance sheet,' and at end of sub-section, the words 'or the society may supply gratuitously every member or person interested with a balanee sheet duly audited containing the same particulars and in the same form as to the receipts and expenditure funds and effects of the society as are contained in the annual return,' shall be inserted after the words 'on demand.'"

New Clause (Repeal of Sub-sections (5) and (6),—(*Dr. Clark,*)—*brought up,* read a first and second time, and *added* to the Bill.

Bill *reported;* as amended, to be considered *To-morrow.*

PUBLIC WORKS LOANS BILL.

(*Mr. Jackson, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Herbert Maxwell.*)

[BILL 364.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Jackson.*)

MR. MARJORIBANKS (Berwickshire): I am not going to detain the House at any length. I only wish to ask two questions. I had hoped this Bill would have given effect to two small matters of detail which have often been pressed upon the House, and which were contained in a Report of the Committee upon harbour accommodation. One is that the area to give collateral security should be increased in a manner something similar to that in vogue in Ireland, where two, three, four, or more baronies were allowed to join and give collateral security. The recommendation was that parts of counties, parishes or parts of parishes should be able to join and give collateral security for the money to make harbours in which they are interested. The second point is with regard to facilities being given to small harbours to consolidate existing debts. That, I think, has been before the Treasury on several occasions. I do not wish to press the matter now, beyond asking for some explanation, and asking whether something could not be done in this direction in Committee?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): With reference to the first question raised by the right hon. Gentleman, we have given effect to the pledge we made to the House to insert in this Bill increased powers of giving collateral security, and I am under the impression the Bill does give the power he desires because it gives power to any Local or Rural Authority to deal with the security, and to any Justice of Quarter Sessions and representative county boards, and it gives the like power for Scotland and for Ireland. We were hoping that we had met this point very fully, because there is no bar not only to one authority of the county giving the security, but more than one authority of a county joining together for the like purpose. With reference to the other point, about the power, as he calls it, to consolidate existing debt, we are advised there is no power at present for that purpose—that is to say, there is no power to take up existing debts, or do otherwise than make advances for new works; and I am afraid there would be considerable difficulty created if that power were given, because I do not think it was ever the intention of Parliament to grant public money merely for the sake of saving interest upon existing debts, and that would be the only effect it could have. I quite sympathize with the objects the right hon. Gentleman has in view—namely, to enable these authorities, if possible, to borrow the money. However, that is a point that may be considered hereafter. I hope what I have said will meet the views of the right hon. Gentleman.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *To-morrow.*

CONVEYANCING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

(*The Lord Advocate, Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland.*)

[BILL 270.] COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."—(*Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland.*)

SIR CHARLES DALRYMPLE (Ipswich): I am sorry to detain the House even for a few moments before you Sir, leave the Chair; but I desire to say a few words about this Bill in explanation of the position I hold in regard to it. A Blocking Notice appeared for some weeks in my name in regard to this Bill; and I wish to explain, not so much how it was that I came to block it, but why I ceased to block it at the present time. My object in blocking the Bill was to endeavour to get it understood, though, perhaps, I am too sanguine in supposing that the Bill is even now understood by the House. That was my object; and I was further desirous of ascertaining whether it was the serious intention of the Government to press forward the Bill during the present Session, a Bill which I hold the Government ought never to have introduced. I have, however, become aware that the Secretary for Scotland (the Marquess of Lothian) convened a meeting of Scottish Members—I think on Tuesday last—and at that meeting there was a very general feeling in favour of the Bill being pressed forward, and having for many years represented a Scottish constituency in this House, I determined yesterday, out of deference to the feeling of that meeting, that I would not renew my Blocking Notice. The only difficulty that stood in the way of removing the Notice was lest I should be supposed to have been influenced by a variety of articles that, I understand, have appeared in a sensational evening journal. I say I understand such articles appeared, because, except the first one, I have not myself seen the articles. Two ideas seem to have weighed with the House generally in reference to this Bill. One was the belief that some result unpremeditated by the Legislature had followed the passing of the Act of 1874; and the other salient idea was the case—if I may so describe it—of the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Lyell). As to the first of those points, it is a matter of keen dispute among lawyers at present in Scotland; and even if the allegation is true, I would assert that the discovery was made so long ago as 1877. The case of Rossmore's Trustees decided the law at that time, and many transactions have taken place on the basis of the settlement of that year. But what I wish particularly to call attention to is this, that this clause is retrospective—a nice thing for a Conservative Government to propose, that this provision of the 1st clause should apply retrospectively! What I wish to ask is this—what is to happen to those who have been paid since 1874? Are they to repay if this measure is to be retrospective? And if not, I ask where is the safeguard against such a monstrous injustice being done? This clause is one which, for the first time, gives sanction to the device whereby purchasers were formerly able to defraud the superior; and that, I say, is a most objectionable and reprehensible principle.

This clause has created great uneasiness among many persons in Scotland. Originally there was an intention on the part of the hon. Member for East Edinburgh (Mr. Wallace) to oppose this clause, and I hold in my hand a statement on behalf of the Corporation of Edinburgh in support of the hon. Member's Amendment to leave out Clause 1. For it must be told that when the Bill first appeared the hon. Gentleman was breathing out threatenings and slaughters against it, under the conviction that it was a Bill that would injure the poor. It was pointed out to him, however, that he was clearly playing into the hands of the owners of land, and from that moment he did not support the Corporation and his opposition to the Bill has disappeared. I beg to point out that the Act of 1874—which this measure is intended to remedy—was essentially a measure of compromise, and it is a perfect delusion to assert that the superior by that Act did not make concession; it was a measure of compromise in the truest sense, and the present measure is intended to upset that arrangement. I earnestly hope, at least, that my right hon. and learned Friend the Lord Advocate will offer a defence of the Bill, and especially of the retrospective character of the Bill. I understand the position of those who wish to sweep away casualties altogether, and this Bill receives support from persons who go all that length. I know that Her Majesty's Government do not intend to go that length; but I doubt if the Government have the least notion of the character of the Bill to which they are lending their name. With regard to the case of the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland, as I have said, that would be abundantly met by Clause 2, and if the Bill consisted of that single Clause 2, there would be no objection, because everyone must desire that if relief can be given in his case it should be given, and if the Government intended that they ought to have confined their attention to Clause 2 alone instead of demanding the far larger proposal of Clause 1, which, in its retrospective character, does very great injustice. I will not detain the House further, and I apologize for having detained it so long; but before I sit down, let me say I shall move the Amendment in Committee, if I am permitted to do so, which stands in the name of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Inverness-shire (Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh), and if not, I shall move a proviso to Clause 1 when the proper time arrives.

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON) (Bute): I think my hon. Friend the Member for Ipswich has a perfect right to ask for an explanation as regards the purport of this Bill, because it does appear that certain rights are vested by Statute in a limited number of persons. Although the subject is highly technical, I think I can explain, in two or three sentences, the object for which this Bill has been framed. The right which it is intended to take away from the superior is the right to demand a full year's rent in the event of a certain change of proprietary. According to the practice before 1874, the superior had not the right to demand that if the vassal took certain steps that were not of a difficult or complicated character. The vassal had the right—I am, of course, using language highly technical, and which, I am afraid, will only be intelligible to Scottish lawyers—to present the heir of the last entered vassal, and to demand for him an entry on a payment not of a year's rent, but of a year's free duty, which, of course, is vastly less than a year's rent. The result of the Act of 1874, however, was that the mere recording or registering a title made the purchaser an entered vassal, and the consequence was that the purchaser became necessarily an entered vassal, and had to pay the casualty due from a purchaser. When a purchase took place, and the purchaser bought his title, the superior drew, not the casualty from the heir, but the full amount of a year's rent. That, I say, was unintended by the Act of 1874, and must, at the same time, have the effect of augmenting the estate of the superior, and consequently diminishing to that extent the estate of the vassal. That is not a state of matters that should continue, and the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for the Elgin Burghs (Mr. Asher), my Predecessor in Office, will remember the subject was brought up last year by the hon. Gentleman the Member for the College Division of Glasgow (Dr. Cameron), in a measure considered to be somewhat crude and not sufficient to effect its object. At the same time, all were agreed the object was one that deserved consideration. The late Government brought in a measure that differed from the present in points of not great materiality, but we consider the present Bill an improvement on that introduced before. My hon. Friend has asked one question, to which he is entitled to an answer, and it is this—how does the Conservative Government, or any Government, justify the passing of an Act which is retrospective to the extent of taking away a right which is given by Statute? I think that is a very serious question, but at the same time the principle of the Bill is this. We believe that the Act of 1874 did not intentionally confer upon the superior this increment of the estate, and accordingly this Bill proposes, acting on that assumption, to take away from superiors the right to exact what was not intentionally conferred. It does not, of course, take back what superiors have already got payment of. But as I said, I think this is a matter deserving grave consideration, because unquestionably the Bill does take away a right at present vested in superiors by virtue of an Act of Parliament. But justification of that is to be found in the view that the Legislature never intended to give that, and may, therefore, fairly take it away. My hon. Friend has said that the Act of 1874 was a measure of compromise. I am bound to say that I have not been able to verify that statement, although it has been made before. The rights of the superiors were affected only to this effect, that the vassal had a right to make a commutation payment in full of payments which occurred periodically. But I cannot discover in the course of the legislation of 1874 any trace of the idea that there was given up by the vassals in favour of the superior the rights now in question. Accordingly, Sir, without detaining the House at greater length with, I am afraid, a not very successful effort to make clear a subject extremely obscure, I will conclude by expressing a hope that you will be allowed to leave the Chair. The Bill is one which ought to be debated; but the subject is one which one has little confidence in pressing strongly, because the majority must take on trust what is stated in regard to it by professional men. I can only say that the subject is one of serious difficulty, and has been considered by successive Administratives in the Legal Department, and the conclusion I have arrived at is in the direction I have pointed out.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1 (Limitation of casualties payable by vassal under Act of 1874).

SIR CHARLES DALRYMPLE, in moving an Amendment, in page 2, line 9, after "superior," insert—

> "Provided always that this clause shall only apply to casualties emerging after the passing of this Act,"

said: I trust I may be allowed to propose this Amendment, although it stands in the name of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Inverness-shire (Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh). I feel bound to repeat the statement that this clause takes away the rights vested in superiors by Act of Parliament; and I can only remind the Committee that the decision of the Judges of the Court of Session in 1887 confirmed their belief in their possession. Many new transactions have been carried through since then on the faith of that decision, and it is a strange proposal to emanate from the present Government that such transactions should be interfered with, and I regret exceedingly that it should have been made. My hon. and learned Friend has distinctly said it is a very doubtful policy, and it is only defended on the ground that something was done, or omitted to be done, by legislation which was not intended. But on that matter there is the greatest possible difference of opinion in the Legal Profession in Scotland, and yet in the face of that difference the Government are making this clause retrospective, and, by so doing, are causing great injustice to the superiors in Scotland.

Amendment proposed,

> At the end of the Clause to add the words, "Provided always that this section shall only apply to casualties emerging after the passing of this Act."—(*Sir Charles Dalrymple.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

MR. A. R. D. ELLIOT (Roxburgh): It is very satisfactory to find that the opposition to the Bill is to be determined by the decision on this one clause, and that there is to be no opposition to other important clauses. It has been said that the effect of this Bill would be to prevent the superiors obtaining certain money advances to which they had a right. Whether or not that is a right description of the state of things between the superiors and vassals before the Act of 1874 I do not know; but I want to ask whether, as a matter of fact, the superiors had a right of obtaining a year's rental of the property in the case of transfer, and whether, when such a right was claimed, the decision was not almost invariably against it. If that was so, then I submit that the language of the hon. Member opposite cannot be justified, and the objections to this clause cannot be maintained.

MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: My hon. and learned Friend is perfectly accurate. The case is this. The vassal who was asked to pay the casualty at once turned round and presented his last predecessor for entry on payment of a year's feu duty. The right of the superior was to ask the larger sum; but it could be at once met by an offer of the heir of the vassal and the smaller sum. The subject, I know, is debateable; but, at the same time, the proposition of the Bill, as I stated in the few observations I made before the Speaker left the Chair, is, that the larger right which is asserted by the superiors is one which unquestionably arises on the terms of the Act of Parliament, but was not a right intentionally conferred by the Legislature. That is the theory of this Bill; and accordingly, the proposal which is made in the Bill as it stands is that that right should be taken away, and that the vassal should be furnished with a good defence against any such clause arising under the provisions of this Bill. The Amendment which my hon. Friend proposes would restrict its operation to casualties emerging from the present time onwards; but that would not give full effect to the view presented in this Bill, and therefore I think that the more consistent course would be to adhere to the clause as it stands.

MR. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox): There can be no question whatever that the Act of 1874 restored certain rights to the superiors, and it is rather late now in the day to turn round and say that that was not the intention of the Legislature. If you do that in this case you may be asked to do so in a great many other cases, and you will be establishing a principle which might be carried to a serious extent. This Act has been acted upon in many cases. Superiors have in terms of it already got from the vassals payments of this character, and yet you are now proposing to relieve parties who by law are bound to pay. I think you would be acting most unconstitutionally in doing so, and the Committee would do well to consider the precedents which they would be establishing. Provisions of this kind are not usually made retrospective. By this Bill you are proposing to take from the superiors rights which are actually vested in them by Act of Parliament, and yet you are not seeking to ensure that the money which some vassals have already been called upon to pay under the Act should be refunded to them. If you wish to be consistent you must also provide for that being done, you must give relief to those who have paid so as to render the Act of Parliament really nugatory as regards the clause binding vassals to pay this casualty. Of course the Government have a majority, and can, if they choose, pass this clause, but I have no hesitation in saying that they are taking upon themselves a grave responsibility in a matter of this kind. Neither I nor the public generally have any interest in this particular matter; it is solely a question between the superior and the vassal, and the latter is probably the more wealthy of the two, but I warn the Government that they will be making a dangerous precedent, and that they must bear the responsibility of doing so.

SIR CHARLES DALRYMPLE: I appeal to my right hon. Friend the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) whether he is aware of what this clause proposes to do? It is one thing to enact, but it is quite a different thing to make the new legislation retrospective. What is now proposed to be done retrospectively may involve the repayment of money which will have passed from one to another 14 years ago, and that is a very serious step to take. I doubt if the Government have the least notion of its seriousness. I am not a lawyer. I yield implicitly to the legal statements of my hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor General for Scotland, but I say that the retrospective action is so serious that if I can get anyone to tell with me I shall be bound to divide the Committee against it.

MR. ASHER (Elgin, &c.): I think the hon. Gentleman opposite is under a misapprehension as to what is the effect of this clause. I understand him to be under the belief that the Bill as it stands is retrospective in this sense, that it involves the repayment of money spent 14 years ago. Now, I do not agree that that is the effect. It would not have the effect of entitling the vassal who had paid to the superior a casualty under the Act of 1874, to get it back simply because the law had been altered as proposed by this Bill. It would merely have the effect of preventing the superior to whom a claim has already emerged, but who has not received payment of it from insisting on the payment of it after this Act has been passed. It is quite true that the Bill is retrospective in a sense, but it is only a limited sense, and it will only affect casualties which have emerged, but which have not been demanded by the superior. I submit that if the Bill is to pass at all it ought to have within it that retrospective character. I quite agree that it is a formidable suggestion to pass an Act of Parliament retrospective in the sense of depriving persons of rights vested in them by an Act of Parliament. But what is the character and object of this Bill? It has been introduced for the purpose of rectifying an error in the Act of 1874, and Act passed solely for the purpose of simplifying the completion of title; it was intended to have no efficacy at all except the abbreviation of the formal steps necessary for the completion of title. But it has been found to give the superior a higher right against his vassal than before for a money claim, and it is now desired that the relation of the superior and vassal as regards that money right should be made precisely as it was before the Act of 1874. I think that that is a perfectly legitimate proposal.

MR. GEDGE (Stockport): The argument of the hon. Member that this clause will apply to only a few cases convinces me that it ought not to be passed. If any great injustice had been done, if any enormous wrong has taken place, then it might possibly be excusable to adopt so vicious a principle as this. But that is not so. Even assuming that the Act of 1874 did make a mistake, it seems that we have gone on for a great many years without there being such a great grievance as to make it necessary to pass an Act to alter it. Now that our attention has been called to it, I think it will be quite enough to pass an Act dealing with the future, and not to trouble ourselves about the few cases which may exist, and in which, if we do not make the Bill retrospective, the law of 1874 will prevail. It is a dangerous principle to establish for the Government to ask us to pass an *ex post facto* law, and I shall not follow them into the Lobby on a principle of this kind.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): Having listened to this debate, and though I do not profess to be learned in Scotch law, it does appear to be that my hon. Friend the Member for Ipswich (Sir Charles Dalrymple) has made out a case for the principle, and therefore, without in the slightest degree impairing the efficiency of the Bill, or taking from it any of the advantages which it possesses, I think we may reasonably accept the Amendment, and permit the Bill to come into operation from and on the day on which it is passed. There is a great deal to be said against the principle of retrospective legislation.

MR. HALDANE (Haddington): I regret extremely the statement of the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House (Mr. W. H. Smith). I think the moderate character of the Bill has been almost understated by the hon. and learned Gentleman the Solicitor General for Scotland (Mr. J. P. B. Robertson) in the able speech in which he explained it to the Committee. The Bill does not even profess to give a new right to the vassal, a right which he had not before the Act of 1874; it will only enable him to regain possession of the advantages he had under the old law, if, and only if, he can find a heir to come forward and satisfy his superior in the way the heir used to satisfy him. It is in that sense, and that sense only, that it is retrospective. As regards what has been said about the principle, I can only say that since this Bill was first introduced in a somewhat different form in the House of Commons, the superiors throughout Scotland have been instructing their agents to hunt up these claims, and enforce them against all sorts of people. To my knowledge, claims many years old have been enforced within the last few months simply because this proposition is before Parliament. It is therefore important that the clause should enable these claims already in existence—not to be defeated, but to be met in the way they used to be met before 1874. If this Amendment is accepted, it will be accepted in the teeth of nine-tenths of the Representatives of the people of Scotland, and in the teeth of the wishes of the entire country.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): I strongly suggest that the hon. Members for Scotland should not allow the Government to proceed further with the Bill until the public have had an opportunity of making their wishes known. We saw that this Bill was actually going to be allowed to lapse until public opinion outside became very strong, and we had better get a few days' further adjournment, in order that public opinion may have a similar effect on the Government in regard to this Amendment. The Bill has now reached a stage that it cannot be dropped, and if the Scotch Members have not sufficient force to defeat this Amendment, it might be worth consideration for them to postpone the discussion until some future day.

MR. A. R. D. ELLIOT (Roxburgh): I am rather sorry to hear the remarks of the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House (Mr. W. H. Smith). I can hardly help thinking that if we understood the intention of the Bill more clearly we should not differ among ourselves, because it appears to me that what the Act of 1874 intended to do was to give some ready relief, and to readjust the rights between the parties. It has not been denied by any person of authority that the case in support of the Bill is that the action of the Act of 1874 was never contemplated by anybody at all, and it does seem to me unjust that the right should, under the circumstances, be enforced by the superior against the vassal. I can only say that if I saw any way to readjust even those payments which have actually been made, I should say it would be the proper thing to do. But that would be impossible. As, however, this section with which we are dealing applies merely to claims that are not made, and have not been paid, I think it just to support the Bill as it stands, and I hope that the Government will not alter it.

MR. WALLACE (Edinburgh, E.): I think I have a right to be heard for a few minutes on this matter, if for no other purpose than to correct an erroneous reference which has been made to myself by the hon. Baronet the Member for Ipswich (Sir Charles Dalrymple). I do not know where he found his material for the description he gave, for I have never opened my lips against the Bill until this moment. It is quite true that an Amendment stood in my name for a short time in connection with the 1st clause of the Bill; but my attitude has never been one of opposition to the Bill. I entirely approve of its spirit, more particularly on the grounds which have drawn forth the opposition to it of my hon. Friend the Member for the St. Rollox Division of Glasgow (Mr. Caldwell), and also on the grounds on which the Amendment is supported by the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith). I am well aware of the exceeding importance of the example which the Government is setting. To me that is one of the great recommendations of the Bill. I am delighted that such a Bill should have been brought forward by a Tory Government, because I believe the principle will be followed in other matters to which I look forward in connection with land legislation. I wish to be allowed to say, therefore, Sir, that my sole object in putting an Amendment for a time on the Paper was to obtain a hearing for the views held on a certain matter, which, as I thought, the constituency I represented desired to have made known. The City of Edinburgh stands in a very remarkable position in regard to its own superiorities. To a large extent the City, as I think will be acknowledged by the two hon. and learned Gentlemen opposite, is the superior of its own property. It is its own superior, and if it pleases it can have a certain arrangement with regard to the exaction of casualties, and providing there is unanimity, it would seem hard it should be interfered with from the outside. It may be considered an absurd arrangement by outside critics, but there would be no justification for their interfering with it. Therefore, for a time the Amendment stood in my name to give an opportunity, at the request of the city, to make an explanation to that extent. But, Sir, I began to discover that that unanimity did not exist. Information came to me that there was dissatisfaction, and therefore I abandoned the position I had taken up. But in all other respects with regard to the spirit and object of the Bill, it had always my most hearty approval, and I am one of its most thorough-going supporters. Therefore I oppose this Amendment.

Mr. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.): I do not know what course the Government really intend to take with regard to this Amendment. We have heard the opinion of the hon. and learned Solicitor General for Scotland (Mr. J. P. B. Robertson)—who evidently understands the subject—and we have have had an opinion from the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith), who says he knows nothing at all about the matter. Under these circumstances, I think the House would do well to decide in accordance with the opinion of the hon. and learned Gentleman who understands what he is talking about. The Government will put themselves in a position to give a bad opinion if it is discreet to do so, and I therefore think we are bound to vote against the Amendment, and support the Bill as introduced by the Government, incomplete though it may be.

Question put.

The Committee *divided:*—Ayes 73; Noes 37: Majority 36.—(Div. List, No. 372.) [2.45 A.M.]

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Remaining Clauses and Preamble *agreed to.*

Bill *reported;* as amended, to be considered *To-morrow.*

IRISH LAND LAW (IRELAND) BILL.

Message from *The Lords,*—That they have *agreed to* certain of the Amendments made by this House to the Irish Land Law Bill, without any Amendment, and to certain other of the said Amendments with Amendments, to which they desire the concurrence of this House; and have made Consequential Amendments to the Bill, to which they desire the concurrence of this House; and have *disagreed to* certain of the Amendments made by this House, for which they assign their Reasons.

SITTING OF THE HOUSE (SATURDAY).

Resolved,—That the Sitting of the House on Saturday next be held subject to the Standing Orders that regulate the Sitting of the House on Wednesdays.—(*Mr. William Henry Smith.*)

House adjourned at Five minutes before Three o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, 12th August, 1887.

MINUTES.]—Public Bills—*First Reading*—Lieutenancy Clerks Allowances * [231].

Second Reading—Metropolitan Board of Works (Money) * (226); Deeds of Arrangement (No. 2) * (230).

Committee—Agricultural Labourers' Holidays (Scotland) * (212), *negatived.*

Report—Truck * (222-232); Licensed Premises (Earlier Closing) (Scotland) * (223).

Report—Committee—Report—Third Reading—Public Parks and Works (Metropolis) * (214), and *passed.*

Third Reading—Settled Land Act (1882) Amendment * (220); Turnpike Roads (South Wales) * (207), and *passed.*

Provisional Order Bill—*Committee—Report—Third Reading*—Tramways (No. 1) * (181), and *passed.*

ISLANDS OF THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC—THE NEW HEBRIDES.

NOTICE OF MOTION. OBSERVATIONS.

The PRIME MINISTER and SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of Salisbury): I observe that the noble Earl opposite (the Earl of Rosebery) has put down on the Paper for next week, a Notice which will involve discussion as to the New Hebrides. I do not wish to contest the Parliamentary right of the noble Earl to bring that question forward—in fact, under some circumstances it might be his duty to do so—but, perhaps, without going further into details, I should say that I think that serious public inconvenience would result from a discussion on this question at this time. I would, therefore, endeavour to persuade the noble Earl to withdraw his Notice for the present.

The Earl of ROSEBERY: I have not the slightest hesitation whatever in replying at once to the appeal of the noble Marquess. Anyone who sees the Notice I have put upon the Paper will easily perceive that it is by no means my intention to embarrass Her Majesty's Government, and I will withdraw the Notice. If I took the view of the noble Viscount the President of the Council (Viscount Cranbrook) as to our numerical powers, it would be impossible under any circumstances to embarrass Her Majesty's Government; but without entering into that, I may at once say that my one and only object in putting that Notice on the Paper was to strengthen the hands of Her Majesty's Government in dealing with what is a grave difficulty indeed. If I had brought it on, I should simply have recapitulated circumstances already well known to your Lordships—that an arrangement with regard to the New Hebrides had been entered into some time ago, and pledges constantly conveyed to the late Government by the French Government. But there is no use in doing that, if in any way it would injure the progress of negotiations. I am delighted to hear it stated that those negotiations have arrived at such a stage as to render discussion undesirable. I do not know whether before we disperse for the holidays the noble Marquess may be able to make any official statement on the matter; but I do hope that when we assemble next year, we shall know that an occupation has come to an end which has ceased, in my opinion, to have any justification at all.

THE LANDED ESTATES COURT (IRELAND).

MOTION FOR A PAPER.

Lord ARDILAUN, in rising to call attention to the present business of the Land Judges Court (Ireland), and to move for a Return with regard to it, giving the number of petitions filed during the last four years, divided into the number each year; the number of estates offered for sale; the number of estates in which the rentals were settled; the number of estates in which receivers were appointed divided into each year; the number of receivers; the number of accounts not lodged within the limit of time appointed; the number of six months' settlements of accounts; the number of yearly settlements; the gross annual rental under receivers for each year; the gross amount collected each year; the number of officials attached to court, and their salaries; and the number and salaries of those in the receiver's department, said, that his object in asking for the Return was to ascertain the causes of the great delays in the business of the Court; for he knew of cases in which those interested did all in their power to press their cases for the preparation of title through the Court, still incomplete after three or four years' interval after the filing of the petition.

The LORD CHANCELLOR of IRELAND (Lord Ashbourne) asked for the names of some of these cases, and he would make immediate inquiry in reference to them.

Lord ARDILAUN said, he would furnish the noble Lord with cases the delay had arisen in, in consequence of the present position of the Court. *The Irish Law Times* of the 28th May last reported that at the ordinary weekly meeting of the Council of the Incorporated Law Society of Ireland a letter from the Secretary to the Southern Law Association was read, which enclosed a copy of a Resolution of that Association. That Resolution was—

> "That the attention of the Council of the Incorporated Law Society be called to the serious delay to the conduct of business in the Court of the Land Judges, occasioned by there being but one examiner (instead of two as heretofore), whose varied and onerous duties preclude the possibility of his investigating titles so as to admit of reasonable progress being made in the conduct of business, as a consequence of which abstracts of title remain in some cases over six months without being ruled on or disposed of, and that the Council of the Incorporated Law Society be requested to adopt such measures as may be considered advisable for the purpose of finding a remedy for the inconvenience referred to."

So far as he could understand or learn, the matter was still under consideration, and precious time was being lost. What was the answer to these complaints of the extraordinary delay? It was this—the Court was undermanned, having been robbed of its best officials, they being removed to another Court; and, secondly, no sales could be effected, and consequently there was no necessity to prepare for sale. The first cause was unquestionably true, because the best officials of the Court had been removed to another Land Court, of which there there were now three in Ireland. But he begged to differ from the second reason altogether—that there was no necessity to prepare titles for sales because, owing to the legislation which had been unfortunately passed in this country for the destruction of the interests of the landlords in Ireland, no one would purchase property, except the occupying tenants. But why should the preparation of estates for sale be so delayed? Why should not every estate in which those interested desired to prepare for sale, he prepared against that happy time when tenants would be willing to purchase the whole of them? It would take years to clear all the titles, and during all that time the arrears would inevitably be running up. Should a scheme of purchase be carried by the Government, were they then to commence to make titles clear and settle rentals? If titles were clear now, he knew of many cases in which mortgagees would purchase to avoid further loss, receivers would be got rid of and an accumulation of arrears prevented. What was the reason for this delay? The reason, he understood, was that it was to save the Treasury some £500 a-year which the appointment of another examiner to do the necessary work would cost. He thought that it was hardly fair of the Government to allow such a comparatively small sum to stand in the way. It would be a very small concession to the landowners who had been so severely hit by the legislation of recent years, and who with the charge holders by the delay were losing tens of thousands a-year. He hoped that when a measure of relief to the tenants had just passed their Lordships' House, they would now consider whether something should not be done which would be just and perfectly equitable to those who desired to sell their property. He thought it was right to add that the Judge of the Court had asked for this assistance, and that it was the Treasury that was particularly in the way. Coming to the subject of receivers appointed under the Court, he said he understood there were over 1,000 estates—about 1,400—under receivers. There was no check upon these officers, except a nominal annual settlement. These receivers were perfectly free during the whole year to collect the rents, and at the end of the year their accounts were brought up and formally audited. Many of them were influenced by fear, and were very anxious to throw the responsibility of pressing for the payment of rents upon others. Some were extremely indolent, and many, he was sorry to say, were very much open to the cultivation of popularity in the collection of rents. He would suggest to the Government that they should carefully look into this question, and see how far these receivers could be supervised and checked by some superior officer of the Court visiting the estates in cases where accounts were unsatisfactory. Formerly the receivers were much more energetic, and collected the rents much better, for these officers looked forward to becoming agents to the estates when sold, and that was a great inducement to them to keep the estates in good order. But at present nobody would purchase an estate but the tenants, and when tenants purchased no agent was required. He thought the receiver's accounts were not audited frequently enough, and as to the system generally there was no second opinion as to its badness. He would give some cases. On one estate the receiver was appointed in August, 1882. The accounts were lodged with the receiver on the 1st September, 1884, 29th January, 1885, 26th February, 1886, and the 12th January, 1887, but none of these accounts had been ever vouched or passed. The rental over which the receiver was appointed amounted to £382. The arrears due on the first account were £1,302; the amount due on the 1886 account was £1,410, or nearly four years' rent. In the next case he would refer to the receiver was appointed on the 6th December, 1881. The yearly rental of the estate was stated in 1884 to be £1,115; the arrears due on the receiver's account for 1884 to be £1,329, and for last year to £2,980. The receiver took the direction of the Judge, and issued about 100 ejectments, at the expense of the estate; but none of the ejectments had ever been put into execution. In the third case the following were the facts:—The receiver was appointed in February, 1882; the rental was £592. The first account was lodged on the 29th February, 1883. The arrears to November, 1882 were £798; to November, 1883, £793, and to November, 1884, £835, while the final account showed the arrears due in May, 1886, to be £1,408. The arrears now were considerably over £2,000. The receiver, however, had got a large amount of the arrears, but had left the country with the money in his pocket. This showed the necessity for some local supervision. He asked from the Government an assurance that they would give some assistance to the Court by the appointment of even a temporary examiner, and that the question of receiverships, which was profoundly unsatisfactory, and worked great injustice, would be considered.

Moved, That there be laid before the House—

"(1.) Number of Petitions filed during last four years, divided into number each year. (2.) Number of Estates offered for Sale. (3.) Number of Estates in which the Rentals were settled. (4.) Number of Estates in which Receivers were appointed, divided into in each year. (5.) Number of Receivers. (6.) Number of Accounts not lodged within the limit of time appointed. (7.) Number of Six Months Settlements of Account. (8.) Number of Yearly Settlements. (9.) Gross Annual Rental under Receivers for each Year. (10.) Gross Amount collected each Year. (11.) Number of Officials attached to Court and their Salaries. (12.) Number and Salaries of those in Receiver's Department."—(*The Lord Ardilaun.*)

LORD ASHBOURNE said, that his noble Friend's first charge was that the Landed Estates Court was undermanned. He would admit that the subject which the noble Lord had called attention to was deserving of consideration, although he did not admit the statements to the extent given by his noble Friend. When the Purchase Act of 1885 was passed, it was true that under the provisions of that Bill, and in order to assist its working, and at the same time assist legitimate economy, certain officials were transferred to the Land Court. There had been two Judges to the Land Court now under discussion, but one of them having resigned, it was decided in the legitimate interests of economy, without interfering with efficiency, not to fill up his place. That left some of the staff for other employment, and two officers were transferred to the Land Commission. He had never heard that the transferrence of those two officials interfered in the slightest degree in the working out of the legitimate operations of the Landed Estates Court in the prepation of title. It was not desirable, and it was obviously inexpedient, when there were practically no sales at present, o appoint any more highly paid permanent officers, but if after some time, it was still found that the present examiner was unable to cope with the business, he could then consider whether he would not seek Treasury sanction for the appointment of some temporary assistant, and thus keep down any arrears of reading titles and making them ready for that sale which they all hoped would soon take place in Ireland. The noble Lord had called attention to the receivers under the Court, but their position was only an index to the state of the country in too many parts. These receivers had to deal with property having a rental of more than £500,000. The delays about which complaint was made in particular cases were not always to be ascribed to the Court. The parties were themselves to blame sometimes. When his noble Friend blamed the receivers for not collecting rents better and more expeditiously, he should bear in mind how many landlords there were not labouring under the administration of the Court; who found a difficulty in getting their rents, and who, at the end of the year, had to put on the paper as assets, a very long list of arrears. He did not, therefore, think in these circumstances it was enough to show that there were arrears due to the receivers in order to convict them of maladministration. The noble Lord charged the receivers with being afraid. Well, in these times, one could not expect a man who collected rents in disturbed districts to be entirely free from timidity. He had no objection to give the noble Lord the fullest possible information that could be given. His noble Friend asked him to allow the Motion to appear again on the Paper in the same form on a future day—say, Thursday next. In the meantime he would communicate with the Judge of the Court, and if the Judge saw no objection he would be the last person in the world to desire to withhold the information for which the noble Lord asked.

LORD FITZGERALD said, he thought the existing state of things ought not to continue. This Landed Estates Court succeeded the old Encumbered Estates Court. Formerly there used to be periodical sales of land, and the Court had been of great service in disposing of encumbered estates; but now, when purchasers could not be found for many estates, the functions of the Court were in abeyance. There was now only one Judge of the Court, Mr. Munroe, but the staff was enormous. In his opinion, this Court had become an excrescence; and in the interests of economy and efficiency it ought to become part of the Land Commission. He believed his noble Friend had not overstated the case when he said there were 1,400 receivers now acting under the Land Court. Nothing could be worse for the country than such a system as that. It was costly in every way, and he thought this matter ought to be taken into consideration by the Government with a view to its being referred to a small Commission.

Motion (by leave of the House) *withdrawn.*

TRUCK BILL.—(No. 222.)

(*The Lord Macnaghten.*)

Amendments *reported* (according to order).

Moved to insert the following New Clause:—

"Whenever, by agreement, custom, or otherwise, a workman is entitled to receive in anticipation of the regular period of the payment of his wages an advance as part or on account thereof, it shall not be lawful for the employer to make any deduction in respect of such advance, on account of poundage, discount, or interest, or any similar charge."—(*The Lord Macnaghten.*)

LORD BRAMWELL said, that he interpreted the Amendment to mean that no such deduction would be lawful unless it had been specially agreed to. It would be open to the master to say that if he advanced wages the servant must agree to a reasonable abatement, and this would make an agreement between the parties in the absence of an agreement to the contrary. On that understanding he saw no objection to it. He might be wrong in the construction he put upon the Amendment; but he was pretty sure he was not.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HALSBURY) said, the clause was intended to do the very thing that the noble and learned Lord deprecated—namely, to render unlawful anything which would be contrary to the general policy of the Act. He had no objection to the clause as it stood; but he could not sit there and hear it recommended on grounds that he could not agree to.

LORD BRAMWELL said, it seemed to him that the ascertainment of the true meaning of the Amendment was a pleasure that would have to be reserved until such time as his noble and learned Friend and he were sitting judiciously to interpret it.

Amendment *agreed to.*

On the Motion of The Lord MACNAGHTEN, the following paragraph was added at the end of Clause 6, which deals with deductions for education:—

"In this section State-inspected school means any elementary school inspected under the direction of the Education Department in England or Scotland, or the Board of National Education in Ireland."

Bill to be *printed*, as amended; and to be read 3ª on *Monday* next. (No. 232.)

LICENSED PREMISES (EARLIER CLOSING) (SCOTLAND) BILL.—(No. 223.)

(*The Earl of Camperdown.*)

REPORT.

Moved, "That the Report of the Amendments be now received."—(*The Earl of Camperdown.*)

LORD DENMAN, in moving that the Report be received that day three months, said, that he hoped that in the present uncertainty of the elements of the Bill, their Lordships would not assent to the measure. In Haddington the Justices declined to interfere, thinking it too late, but the Sheriff considered that early closing would increase the number of shebeens, whilst in the same county, Dunbar sent a petition against the Bill *quieta non novere* was a safe motto, and if change were to begin, the Forbes McKenzie Act might be attacked. He believed that the only effect of the Bill would be to unsettle everything, and to settle nothing.

Amendment *moved*, to leave out ("now,") and add at the end of the Motion ("this day three months.")—(*The Lord Denman.*)

[The Amendment, not being seconded, was not put.]

Motion *agreed to.*

Amendments *reported* (according to order).

THE EARL OF WEMYSS, in moving an Amendment to Clause 9, to add to the end of clause, "and shall not apply to any burgh, town, or populous town containing fifty thousand inhabitants and upwards," said, he considered his proposal so reasonable and rational, that he did not think it necessary to trouble their Lordships with many reasons in favour of it. Before, however, he entered into consideration of the Amendment, he desired to refer to a remark which fell from the noble Duke, whom he did not then see in his place (the Duke of Argyll) the other evening when he expressed himself rather in favour of this Bill. On that occasion the noble Duke had not accurately stated the views he (the Earl of Wemyss) took of the question. The noble Duke said he could understand his (Earl Wemyss') objections to the measure, because he took his stand on broad and intelligent principles, and the way in which he defined those principles was this—that he (Earl Wemyss) on licensing questions always went on the broad lines that they were matters of police, and should only be dealt with by the police in relation to crime. That, however, was not his view of the question. He went a great deal further than merely thinking that when a drunkard was in the street with a crowd about him he was a nuisance to everybody, and therefore it was the duty of the police to take cognizance of the matter; because he thought also that it was their duty to look after the publicans, if, as they were told, they were in the habit of sending drunken men into the streets. Having said that much, he would express his regret that the Government had not seen their way to dealing with this question in a more broad and complete manner. It might be desirable that public-houses in Scotland should be closed at a more regular hour; but, that was a question which could be more properly dealt with in the large and comprehensive measure of local government which they were promised. The Government had not done that, and therefore they had to be thankful for small mercies, and he thanked the noble Earl (the Earl of Camperdown) for what he had done in the way of mitigating the effects of this Bill. When the measure came up to their Lordships' House, it made this alteration in the closing of public-houses, that whereas at present 11 o'clock was the time for closing, with a discretionary power of a certain character in the hands of magistrates, this Bill proposed that the closing should take place an hour earlier—namely, at 10 o'clock, there being no discretionary power left to the licensing authority. A very serious question of the liberty of the subject was involved in this. It was to his mind exceedingly hard that the sober many should be put to very great inconvenience for the sake of a drunken few. He believed that they had been told that the measure did not curtail the liberty of the subject; but, as introduced by his noble Friend, the measure was to apply without any exception to all parts of Scotland—alike to town and country. He contended that the Bill, if it were to be applied even with a discretionary power to the licensing authorities to all parts of Scotland—town and country alike—would not work well. Its provisions would be found almost intolerable in many country districts, and they would be found intolerable in their operation in the large towns, where the means of amusement, the habits, customs, and character of the people were totally different. What he proposed had already been admitted in their legislation—it was admitted in a Bill, in every Bill which had been introduced, whether optional or prohibitory, as regarded England, because that great Metropolis had always been exempted from the legislation. One would suppose that if the principle which was advocated was sound, it would be equally sound in its application to London—in one place just as well as in another. Why was it, then, that the Metropolis was always exempted from legislation of this kind? He saw his noble and learned Friend (Lord Fitzgerald) present, and his own impression was that this kind of exceptional legislation has been admitted also in the case of Ireland, and that there were certain large towns to which the Sunday Closing Act did not extend. It certainly did not apply to Dublin and other large towns, and he considered that the same principle which he desired by his Amendment to carry out should be applied to Scotland. His proposal was to exempt all large towns with 50,000 inhabitants from the discretionary powers that were given to the Justices, and to leave the law as it at present stood. That discretionary power had been tried in England already, under the Bill of 1872, brought in by Mr. Bruce, and it had been found that it would not work, and the Act fell through after two or three years. It was found not to work well in Liverpool and the other large towns, where the measure caused so much irritation and ill-will that the Act was allowed to drop. There was also this further evil which he would point out, and it was upon matters of this kind that he would invite their Lordships' special attention, as they could not be lost sight of in considering the question. It was a fact that these restrictions encouraged illicit drinking, and it was impossible to exaggerate the many evils which were caused by over-restrictive legislation of this kind. The Bill was brought in by Dr. Cameron, Member for the College Division of Glasgow, and he (the Earl of Wemyss) found that the hon. Member had reprinted from one of the Glasgow papers his reason for legislation of this kind; but if his pamphlet set forth all the advantages of the measure, he thought that practically he had reproduced the worst arguments he could have found, for according to the hon. Gentleman, there was in Glasgow a large system of illicit drinking, commonly called shebeening. Now, if there was one place in the world which should be the paradise of water-drinkers, it should be the State of Maine in America. There all drinking of alcoholic drinks was prohibited absolutely, and with what result? Why, if they took the test of crime, of madness, of drunkenness, and he was told also of Divorce Court cases, the State of Maine, in proportion to its population, as far as he understood, was far ahead of any other State in America. Not only that, but in regard to illicit drinking there were so many shebeens and drinking clubs in Maine, that if there was the same proportion in respect to population as existed there in Glasgow they would have something like 4,000 shebeens in Glasgow and 2,000 drinking clubs. He thought that with those facts before them, he had said sufficient in support of his Amendment.

Moved, in Clause 9; page 3, line 38, after ("1882") to insert, ("and shall not apply to any burgh, town, or populous place containing fifty thousand inhabitants and upwards").—(*The Earl of Wemyss.*)

The Earl of ABERDEEN said, he thought it would be unfortunate if the House should agree to the Amendment of the noble Earl (the Earl of Wemyss). The noble Earl had given them an argument in his speech which would go to show that the closing of public-houses altogether might be very undesirable, and which might have been called intolerable. The noble Earl had quoted the case of the State of Maine; but, after all, this Bill with the Amendment already adopted was perfectly free from any of the objections pointed out by the noble Earl with regard to the inconvenience which might arise in large towns. No doubt in large towns there was a provision with respect to *bonâ fide* travellers. Inconvenience might, however, still arise in the case of travellers; but he apprehended their case would be met by the railway station refreshment-rooms, which were under special regulations licensed by the authorities for such purposes. The noble Earl (the Earl of Wemyss) had said that it was very hard that the sober majority should suffer for the minority who exceeded. But the sober majority themselves called for some such measure as this. He (the Earl of Aberdeen) had ascertained that in some of the large towns of Scotland, and in a certain one with which he was acquainted, there was a very large preponderance of public opinion in favour of granting this power of restriction as in the Bill. Of course, it was also to be considered that there was a class of persons who would be affected by this Bill who were not directly referred to, though perhaps it was not their Lordships' place to allude to them. He meant the *employés* of the licensed victuallers. Parliament had already sanctioned legislation in regard to the hours of labour of certain persons; and, therefore, this would be no new precedent, for it was obvious that they were a particular class. He should say, in conclusion, that he did most decidedly come to the opinion that there was a very large preponderance of public opinion in the principal large towns of Scotland in favour of the Bill, so far as could be gathered from the comments made thus far.

Lord BRAMWELL said, that when he was speaking on a Scotch Bill the other evening the noble Earl in charge of the Bill (the Earl of Camperdown) had been unkind enough to remind him that he (Lord Bramwell) was not a Scotchman. He was conscious of that defect, but he now desired to say a word on this subject; and really if Englishmen might not talk about Scotch affairs, it suggested a consequence he was sure their Lordships would object to. What struck him on reading this Bill was this —Why, if 10 o'clock was right, as the noble Earl would seem to make it appear by the Bill, is 11 wrong? Well, it might be asked, why, if 11 o'clock is right, should 12 o'clock be wrong? He would make the same answer in both cases—namely, that they had got 11 o'clock, and if they wanted to alter it to either 12 or 10, they ought to give a reason for the alteration. But no reason had been given. The noble Earl had been good enough to take up the Bill. He would not suspect him (Lord Bramwell) of saying anything disrespectful of him, but he did think the Bill was a peddling piece of legislation. Why meddle with the hour now fixed? At present, 11 o'clock was the hour, and people had suited their habits to it. He did not suppose that all sober people in Scotland went to bed at 10 o'clock. He supposed there were large towns in Scotland in which people coming from theatres and other places would like to have a glass of beer, and they had suited themselves to the law as it stood. But, all at once, was this change proposed to be put upon them without any reason. It was said that the sober majority desired this legislation; but he should like to know what the sober majority actually was. What did it mean? If the sober majority are people who thought all drinking was wrong, then he should protest against their interfering with him in his opinion, who did not think it was wrong. Let those people who thought there was no harm in a glass of beer have their glass of beer. He really submitted that this was a peddling piece of legislation interfering with the existing state of the law without any reason being given in support of it.

The Earl of CAMPERDOWN said, he would be the last to prevent the noble and learned Lord taking part in any discussion regarding Scotland; but when another Scotch measure was being discussed the other day, the noble and learned Lord said he could not understand it, and he had replied that, being an Englishman, he was not acquainted with the agricultural customs of Scotland, one of which was to engage agricultural labourers by the year. In spite, however, of the speech of the noble and learned Lord, he must ask their Lordships not to accept the Amendment, and if it was pressed, he must resist it as far as he could. He would ask their Lordships to remember exactly the position in which this Bill stood. When the measure entered their Lordship's House, the noble Earl on the Cross Benches (the Earl of Wemyss) objected to the Bill on the ground that it fixed the hour of closing public-houses for 10 o'clock in the evening. He (the Earl of Camperdown) would admit that, at once, and without pressure of any kind, he saw the objection to the Bill in that form, and said he would endeavour to design a compromise or an arrangement which he thought would be more satisfactory to the opponents of the Bill. He introduced that arrangement; it was now in the Bill, and it left to the Licensing Authorities power to direct that public-houses in their districts should be closed at any hour between 10 and 11 o'clock. If he had known at that time that this Amendment was to be brought forward, he was bound to say that he would not have made any alteration in the Bill. He took the line he did in consequence of what was said by the noble Viscount the Secretary of State for India (Viscount Cross), who intimated that in large towns he would prefer a later hour of closing. No other Amendment was placed upon the Paper when the Bill went into Committee. He (the Earl of Camperdown) therefore placed his Amendment on the Paper as to the discretionary power, and, as he said, no other Amendment was placed there. He was bound to say that if the present Amendment (that of the Earl of Wemyss) had been then placed on the Paper, he would at once have withdrawn his own. If, therefore, the House accepted the Amendment of the noble Earl (the Earl of Wemyss) he would have to ask their Lordships to strike his own Amendment out of the Bill, because the change he sought to have made in the Bill was one he was prepared to support; but further than which he was not prepared to go. He asked their Lordships to consider what was the effect of the Amendment now proposed. The Bill as it stood gave to all Licensing Authorities a discretionary power as to the hours of closing public-houses within their district between 10 and 11 o'clock; but now the noble Earl proposed to say that in certain big towns they were to have no discretion. That was to say, that a discretion was to be given to Licensing Authorities in the country districts, or in other districts which were not populous; but when they entered the big towns, Parliament said that they should fix the hour of closing, and it would not be earlier than 11 o'clock. That was the effect of the Amendment of his noble Friend; he said Parliament should interfere with the Licensing Authority in big towns, but should not interfere everywhere else. He (the Earl of Camperdown) submitted that that was the worst possible proposal that could be made. Surely the Licensing Authorities would not shut up the houses over which they had jurisdiction, unless they were of opinion that it was the wish of the people that they should be shut. They were not likely, for instance, to shut up licensed houses in Glasgow, unless they had public opinion in their favour. Why should they not trust the Licensing Authorities in Glasgow, if they were going to trust them elsewhere? He told their Lordships that the moment they entered into this question of populous places they were in a position of very great difficulty. His noble Friend also instanced to their Lordships the case of the Sunday Closing Bill in Ireland; but the case which he put could have no bearing at all upon Scotland, because in Ireland there was no discretion at all given to the Licensing Authority with regard to the hour of closing in Ireland out of Dublin. Did not his noble Friend see that his comparison fell to the ground entirely? In Scotland the Bill did not fix an hour, but left it to the discretion of the justices to do so. He asked the House to bear in mind that that arrangement was almost, to a certainty, the arrangement which they would make at no distant day; and if they created this special exemption in favour of a few big towns, they would do that which at no distant time they would have to withdraw. An Amendment of this sort was proposed in the House of Commons, and it was rejected by a very large majority, and the reason why it was rejected was the difficulty of dealing with Glasgow—a difficulty which would arise out of the Amendment now proposed. There were close to Glasgow a number of smaller towns, one of which was Partick. If the Licensing Authority for Partick chose to select an earlier hour than 11 o'clock they would be closed earlier than the Glasgow houses, which would remain open to 11 o'clock. That was only one instance of the many difficulties which would have to be met. If they were going to give a discretionary power to Licensing Authorities, they must give it to all, or to none of them; if they trusted none of them, they would throw out the Bill; but if they did not take that course he asked their Lordships not to weaken and cut down the Bill in the way they were asked to do. Under these circumstances he asked their Lordships not to accept the Amendment.

The SECRETARY for SCOTLAND (The Marquess of Lothian) said, that with reference to the last point which had fallen from the noble Earl (the Earl of Camperdown), he thought that a defect in the Amendment of the noble Earl on the Cross Benches (the Earl of Wemyss) was, that it did not state more distinctly what towns he intended excluding; but, nevertheless, he (the Marquess of Lothian) thought that the Amendment should distinctly be supported. He was going to propose to his noble Friend, in order to meet the difficulty, that in the event of his Amendment being carried, he should introduce a Schedule which would name all the burghs round Glasgow—he thought they were nine in number—as places which should be the same in regard to the hours of closing as the city of Glasgow itself. He was surprised to hear the noble Earl (the Earl of Camperdown) say that this difficulty arose out of the Amendment of the noble Earl on the Cross Benches (the Earl of Wemyss). The noble Earl had pointed out the anomalous state of matters which would arise under the Amendment of his noble Friend—that public-houses would be open till 11 in Glasgow, and would be shut at an earlier hour in Partick and the other burghs which surrounded Glasgow; but if the Bill were carried as it now stood, there was nothing to prevent the Licensing Authorities in Glasgow keeping the public-houses open till 11 o'clock, and some of the neighbouring burghs shutting at 10, others at 11, and others at some time between 10 and 11 o'clock. That very difficulty would be sure to arise under the Bill as it now stood; and he hoped that if the Amendment of the noble Earl on the Cross Benches were carried, he would consent to a Schedule being introduced. With reference to the general question, he stated to the noble Earl (the Earl of Camperdown) when he introduced his Amendment, that he accepted that Amendment, but on the understanding that he should like to vote for the Amendment of the noble Earl on the Cross Benches (the Earl of Wemyss), and he would take the opportunity of saying that he was sorry the noble Earl did not introduce his Amendment in the Committee stage; because it placed them in rather an awkward position, as the noble Earl who had charge of the Bill had stated that if the Amendment of the noble Earl on the Cross Benches were carried, he (the Earl of Camperdown) would withdraw the Amendment he carried in Committee, and then the Bill would pass as it originally came to that House, with the addition of the Amendment of the noble Earl (the Earl of Wemyss), so that all public-houses in Scotland would be closed at 10 o'clock, except those in places which had a population of over 50,000. He must confess that he was in favour of the Amendment of the noble Earl on the Cross Benches; but he further thought that there were various parts of Scotland where the discretion of the Licensing Authorities as to places which had not a population of over 50,000 would be valuable. In the watering places in the West of Scotland in the summer, it would be a great convenience that the public-houses should be kept open for the convenience of visitors after 10 o'clock. If the noble Earl (the Earl of Camperdown) withdrew the Amendment which he carried in Committee, that would be impossible, and he hoped he would reconsider his determination to withdraw it. He (the Marquess of Lothian) thought that Scotland should be placed on the same footing as England in regard to the matter—that is to say, that in England all populous places were exempted from the time limit, and public-houses were open till 11, and he thought Scotland should be placed, so far as possible, in the same position. As to what the noble Earl had said about trusting the Licensing Authorities, the position was different in large towns from what it was in the country, and he did not think it implied any want of confidence in the Licensing Authorities to make this exception in favour of the large towns. He thought there might be a difficulty as to what was called a populous place—namely, as to whether the limit should be 30,000—20,000 or 30,000; but as the noble Earl had placed the limit at 50,000, he was not disposed to quarrel with that, and was prepared to support the Amendment.

On Question? Their Lordships *divided*:—Contents 19; Not-Contents 10: Majority 9.

Resolved in the *affirmative.*

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN gave Notice that at the third reading he would move to omit the Amendment which was inserted in Committee giving discretion to the Licensing Authorities.

Bill to be read 3ª on *Monday* next.

AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS' HOLIDAYS (SCOTLAND) BILL.—(No. 212)

(*The Earl of Camperdown.*)

COMMITTEE.

Order of the Day for the House to be put into Committee, read.

Moved, "That the House do now resolve itself into Committee upon the said Bill."—(*The Earl of Camperdown.*)

THE EARL OF GALLOWAY, in rising to move as an Amendment—

"That it is inexpedient for the House to proceed further with a Bill of so crude and delusive a character in such a hasty manner at this period of the Session, without the opportunity of first ascertaining the genuine opinion of all classes of agriculturists in Scotland with regard to its provisions,"

said, he knew something of the feeling, not only of agriculturists, but of labourers; and he could say that everyone was of opinion that this was an unnecessary Bill. If he might use a vulgar expression, he would say that, as this Bill now appeared before them, the viscera had been taken out of it. It simply proposed to insist on a holiday being given to agricultural labourers in four specified months of the year and the farmers were not allowed to choose those months. The Bill, therefore, would only have this effect, which he believed was at the bottom of its production—namely, of stirring up unnecessary animosities between farmer and labourer, of which, unhappily, there had been enough of recent years, and to stir up animosity between the owners of land and the occupiers; and he did not think at the end of the Session, on the 12th of August above all, they should bring forward a measure of this character, affecting the whole of Scotland. It was really what he might call rather monstrous. But he would simply say that he knew, for a fact, that in a great many agricultural parts of Scotland, it was the last thing the labourers themselves wanted. The effect of it would be to curtail the number of their holidays after all. It was notorious that in Scotland New Year's Day had been a holiday from—well—the days of Adam. Then there were still in some parts of Scotland two Fast-days, though in others, only one; and there were always two fair days. Moreover, in addition, there were all over Scotland local Agricultural Associations; and the farmers always gave their labourers a holiday on the annual show day of these associations. But under the Bill a stop might be put to these voluntary arrangements because it insisted on every farmer giving certain holidays, and this, he held, would be an act of folly, which would be anything but desirable. The noble Earl concluded by moving his Amendment.

Amendment *moved*,

To leave out from ("that") to the end of the Motion, and insert the following words ("it is inexpedient for the House to proceed further with a Bill of so crude and delusive a character in such a hasty manner at this period of the Session, without the opportunity of first ascertaining the genuine opinion of all classes of agriculturists in Scotland with regard to its provisions.")—(*The Earl of Galloway.*)

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN said, he was perfectly well aware that to-day was the 12th of August, and a very inconvenient day to deal with important legislation. But as long as it was not in their Lordships' power to control the progress of Business in "another place," they had to take the Business as it came up to them. He hoped the noble Earl would not press his Amendment to a Division for this reason. There were two Fast days in Scotland at present; but they were in process of being abolished, and the agricultural servants in certain parts of Scotland feared that that if these were abolished, the holidays which they represented would be abolished also. It was to obviate that fear that the Bill was introduced. He thought if their Lordships would accept the Amendments he intended to propose in Committee, they would find that no objection could be taken to the Bill.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (The Marquess of LOTHIAN) said, he did not think that the Bill would either do good or ill. The only point he had intimated on the second reading that he would strongly object to was the clause which provided that no reductions should be made from the wages of servants in respect of these holidays. That seemed to him to introduce a new principle, and in a Bill of this kind a very objectionable principle. Now that the noble Earl in charge of the Bill proposed to omit the clause which provided that no deductions should be made for the holidays, he hoped their Lordships would agree with the Bill, because the Amendment of the noble Earl (the Earl of Galloway) was taking too much notice of a Bill of this description, it having passed through the other House. The noble Earl who moved the Amendment said in one breath that the Bill was worth nothing at all, and in the next that it was so important that there was no time to adequately consider it at this period of the Session.

On Question, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Motion?" Their Lordships *divided*:—Contents 9; Not-Contents 9.

The numbers being equal, it was (according to ancient rule) *resolved* in the *negative.*

House adjourned at half-past Six
o'clock, to Monday next, a
quarter past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, 12th August, 1887.

MINUTES.]—SUPPLY—*considered in Committee Resolutions* [August 11] *reported.*

PUBLIC BILLS — *Ordered — First Reading —* Herring Fishery (Scotland)* [372].

First Reading—Escheat (Procedure)* [373].

Second Reading—Post Office Savings Banks and Government Annuities* [344]; Trinidad and Tobago* [368]; British Settlements* [369].

Report of Select Committee—Metropolitan Police [No. 285].

Committee — Labourers' Allotments * [329]—R.P.

Committee — *Report* — Public Works Loans * [364]; Public Libraries (Scotland) Acts Amendment * [180].

Considered as amended—*Third Reading* — Conveyancing (Scotland) Acts Amendment * [270], and *passed.*

Withdrawn—Parliamentary Franchise (Extension to Women) * [128].

QUESTIONS.

—o—

POOR LAW (IRELAND)—ELECTION OF GUARDIANS IN THE COOKSTOWN UNION.

Mr. BLANE (Armagh, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether Henry A. Mann (clerk of the Cookstown Union and George A. Gunning's rent clerk) enabled George A. Gunning (his employer) to give a number of illegal proxy votes to the Conservative candidate, Mr. Black, at the annual election (March, 1887) of a Poor Law Guardian to represent the Ballynasullos Division of the Cookstown Union during the year 1887; whether Mr. Bernard Loughran, the Nationalist candidate, protested against these votes being added to those legitimately given to Mr. Black at the counting of the votes, and wrote to the Local Government Board complaining of the partiality of Mr. Mann, demanding a scrutiny, and asking for an investigation; whether Mr. Mann thereupon disallowed the votes given by George A. Gunning to Mr. Black, and declared Mr. Loughran duly elected the following Saturday; whether Mr. Mann resides in Gunning's Estate Office; and whether it is in accordance with the Rules and Regulations of the Poor Law Board that the clerk of any union should engage or be employed by any individual or Company as clerk; whether the Petty Sessions Office in Cookstown is used also as a Loan Office; and whether any person wishing to see the Petty Sessions Clerk on legal matters must go into the Loan Office; whether, in the absence of Mr. Fleming, the clerks therein act as Petty Sessions Clerks; whether Mr. Fleming, the Petty Sessions Clerk, personally assists the persons whom he has employed to collect the tolls of the Cookstown Market; whether a Circular was issued by the Registrar of Petty Sessions Clerks, prohibiting Petty Sessions Clerks from engaging in any employment save that of Petty Sessions Clerk; and, whether this Circular has since been cancelled?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): The Clerk of the Union, who also acted as relieving officer, reports that Mr. G. A. Gunning neither attempted nor was allowed to give illegal proxy votes. Mr. Loughran, during the scrutiny, objected generally to all the proxy votes; but made no specific objections. He subsequently wrote to the Local Government Board complaining of the action of the relieving officer. He was asked by the Board to specify the particular votes to which he referred; but did not do so. The returning officer disallowed some votes handed in by Mr. Francis Gunning, not by Mr. George Gunning, on account of an omission in the form. Mr. Loughran was declared elected. Mr. Gunning rents from Mr. Mann two rooms, which are used as a rent office. There is no Rule of the Local Government Board such as that referred to; and, as the hon. Member has been already informed, they see no reason to interfere so long as the clerk of the Union properly discharges his duties as such. As regards the case of Mr. Fleming, the Registrar of Petty Sessions Clerks informs me that hitherto the discount business has been carried on in the same room where Petty Sessions business was conducted; but that Mr. Fleming has now removed the latter business into an entirely separate office. In the absence of Mr. Fleming from the office, which is very rare, summonses are filled up by one of his clerks. Mr. Fleming states that he takes no part personally in the collection of tolls. No Circular, such as that indicated in the Question, has ever been issued by the Registrar of Petty Sessions Clerks.

LABOURERS (IRELAND) ACTS—SHORTHAND WRITERS (EXPENSES).

Mr. HOOPER (Cork, S.E.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether he is aware that the sum included for shorthand writers in the preliminary expenses of carrying out schemes under the Labourers' Acts in Ireland amounts to more than £3,000; whether the largeness of this sum is due to Inspectors carrying shorthand writers from Dublin to local inquiries at heavy cost for travelling and hotel expenses, as well as for daily fees; whether the shorthand writers' bill in the case, for instance, of the Fermoy inquiry was £120; whether there is any reason to believe that the shorthand writers' work could, in most cases, be efficiently performed by local shorthand writers, and at much less expense; whether there is a Rule of the Treasury requiring Inspectors to employ local shorthand writers, and whether such Rule is almost wholly ignored; and, whether, under the circumstances, he will issue instructions to have this Rule strictly adhered to in future?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.), in reply, said, the charges in respect to shorthand writers in connection with the Labourers' Act were as stated in the Question. He understood that in many cases the Inspectors employed shorthand writers from Dublin. The charges were carefully checked, and the Treasury scale strictly adhered to. There was no such Treasury Rule as was mentioned in the Question.

POST OFFICE (TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT)—"NIGHT," OR "HALF-RATE" TELEGRAPHIC MESSAGES.

Mr. SINCLAIR (Falkirk, &c.) asked the Postmaster General, If he is yet able to give any information as to the establishment at an early date of a system of "night," or "half-rate," telegraphic messages?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University): I am well aware of the interest taken by the hon. Gentleman in this question. I have devoted some consideration to it at the hon. Gentleman's instance. I am sorry I cannot give a more favourable reply. After the fullest consideration I can give to the subject, I am of opinion that it would be undesirable at the present time to make any alteration in the tariff for night messages, seeing the comparatively short period that has elapsed since the present tariff came into operation. As yet the financial result of the change cannot be ascertained with certainty; but as soon as we are in a position to know exactly where we stand with regard to the effects of the change, I think the experiment which the hon. Gentleman suggests will be a very interesting one to try.

POST OFFICE (TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT)—REDUCTION OF CHARGES.

Mr. SINCLAIR (Falkirk, &c.) asked the Postmaster General, If, considering the facilities afforded to the Press for the transmission of long telegrams, he is prepared to make any concession to individuals and private firms desirous of sending telegrams of considerably more than the average length; and, if he can see his way, with a view alike to promote the interest of the public and the financial prosperity of the Post Office, to reduce the charge for such telegraphic messages as exceed 24 words to 1*s.* for the first 24 words (the present charge for a message of this length), and a further charge of 1*d.* for each additional four words after the first 24?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University): I am afraid I can only return the same reply as I did to the previous Question.

UPPER BURMAH—NATIVE BURMESE PRISONERS.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, How many native Burmese prisoners have been captured since 1st January, 1886, in the process of annexation and pacification of Upper Burmah; how many of these are now alive in prison in the Bengal Presidency; how many native Burmese have died in gaol in the Bengal Presidency, or in other custody, since their capture; whether any, and how many, of such prisoners have been tried, and on what charges; and, whether the Returns for the present year show a large increase in violent crime in Lower Burmah since the annexation of Upper Burmah?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Sir John Gorst) (Chatham): It is impossible to give any estimate of the number of prisoners captured during the military operations in Upper Burmah. During 1886, 148 Burmese prisoners were sent to the Bengal gaols; but this includes convicts from both Upper and Lower Burmah. I cannot tell how many of these (if any) died in gaol; but their general average of health is reported to have been fair, and their conduct remarkably good. The Secretary of State is not aware that any prisoners were detained except for the purpose of being tried by Civil Law. No Returns of the offences charged and results of trials have been received, except those to be found at page 153 of the last Burmah Blue Book. The hon. Member will see that the most common offence is robbery and dacoity. The answer to the last Question is, Yes. The reason was, no doubt, the spread of anarchy and disorder from Upper to Lower Burmah.

METROPOLITAN POLICE FORCE—THE SUPERANNUATION FUND.

Mr. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether the members of the Metropolitan Police Force are compelled to subscribe to a Superannuation Fund?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): Under the provisions of 2 & 3 *Vict.* c. 47, s. 22, a deduction at the rate of 2½ per cent is made from the pay of Chief Constables, Assistant Chief Constables, Superintendents, and Inspectors, and at the rate of 2 per cent from the pay of sergeants and constables, which deductions are applied to the Police Superannuation Fund.

METROPOLITAN POLICE FORCE—PROMOTION.

Mr. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, What is the principle of promotion in all the grades of the Metropolitan Police Force; whether there is any limit of age or other personal disqualification stated in the Police Regulations as a bar to promotion; how many officers have been appointed from the Army as Chief Constables in the last two years; if they have taken the place of the District Superintendents; when, and why, the post of District Superintendent was abolished; and, whether these gentlemen were not capable of performing the duties of the new office?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): All promotions up to the rank of Superintendent are made from the next rank below. Those best qualified in all respects are selected, seniority of service being duly considered. There is no absolute limit of age; but in ordinary cases a sergeant is not promoted to be Inspector if he is over 40, and a constable is not promoted to be sergeant if he has had more than 10 years' service, or is over 35. A man of insufficient education, or against whom there have been reports, would not be promoted. Two Army officers have been promoted during the last two years. The office of District Superintendent has not been abolished; but the name has been changed to that of Chief Constable. All the present Chief Constables—five in number—were District Superintendents.

Mr. LAWSON asked, what place the two Army officers had taken?

Mr. MATTHEWS: They have been appointed Chief Constables.

WAR OFFICE—THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE EMPLOYMENT OF RESERVE AND DISCHARGED SOLDIERS.

Major RASCH (Essex, S.E.) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the excellent work which is being done by "The National Association for the Employment of Reserve and Discharged Soldiers;" and, whether the officers of the Society are receiving any practical support from the various Offices and Departments under Government?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. E. Stanhope) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle), in reply, said, the attention of the Government had been drawn to the excellent work which was being done by the Association referred to; and, in consideration of its claims upon the State for material support, the sum of £200 was contributed annually from Army Funds in aid of its expenses. The Financial Secretary to the War Office had for some time been in negotiation with the heads of the various Government Departments, with a view of securing a certain number of Government appointments for pensioners and Reservists, and had obtained some promises that the claims of such men should be favourably considered on the occurrence of vacancies. He earnestly hoped that it might ultimately be found possible to allot a fixed proportion of the various subordinate positions to pensioners and Reservists exclusively; and could assure his hon. and gallant Friend that the War Office would use every endeavour to attain this very desirable object.

ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY—CIVIL EMPLOYMENT.

MR. J. O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether it is a Rule of the Irish Constabulary Force that no member of the Force shall apply for any Civil position while receiving the pay or discharging the duties of a constable; whether Head Constable Irvine, of Cork, has applied for, and obtained, the appointment of station master of the Cork and Muskerry Light Railway, while still performing the duties of a Head Constable of Police at Cork; and, whether he will inquire into the case; and, if an infraction of the Rule has taken place, state what action he will take in the matter?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): The Inspector General of Constabulary informs me there is no such Rule as that indicated in the Question.

FREE PUBLIC LIBRARIES ACT—THE KENSINGTON VESTRY.

MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.) asked Mr. Attorney General, Whether a London Vestry, elected under the Metropolis Management Act, 18 & 19 *Vict.* c. 120, can, under the Free Library Act of 1855, be interpreted to mean "a Board," or "an authority," for putting into execution the Free Public Libraries Acts without the aid of Commissioners; and, whether the Kensington Vestry was justified, on 13th July, in postponing for three months the election of Commissioners, after a majority of the ratepayers had decided that the Free Public Libraries Acts should be adopted, and that "the Commissioners be appointed forthwith?"

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER) (Isle of Wight): In reply to the hon. Member's Question, I have to say that the point raised in his Question is one of considerable difficulty. In my opinion, a London Vestry elected in the ordinary way is not "an authority" for putting into execution the Free Library Act of 1855 without the aid of Commissioners. With regard to the second part of the hon. Member's Question, I have no knowledge of the circumstances under which the Kensington Vestry postponed the election of Commissioners; and I am therefore unable to express an opinion as to whether or not they were justified in so doing.

HIGHLAND CROFTERS—PAYMENT OF RATES ON REDUCED RENTS.

DR. R. MACDONALD (Ross and Cromarty) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether he is aware that crofters in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, whose rents have been reduced by the Commissioners, decline to pay rates on the rents so reduced; in what manner is the deficiency to be made up; and, whether the Government would grant any sum in aid?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): I am aware that certain crofters are withholding their rates, notwithstanding that their rents are now less than formerly; but I hope they will be better advised than to continue to do so. Her Majesty's Government has no fund from which to make up deficiencies caused by ratepayers refusing to fulfil their statutory obligations, and must decline to do anything that will add to the taxation of other members of the community in order to do so.

BOARD OF WORKS DEPARTMENT DUBLIN—VACANT SURVEYORSHIP.

MR. D. SULLIVAN (Westmeath, S.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether two offices of Surveyor in the Board of Works Department, Dublin, are now vacant; whether the vacancies are about to be filled by appointing two Englishmen to them; and, whether the Board will not advertise for candidates for the vacancies, and select the fittest before making the appointments?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): There are, I am informed, two vacancies, one for a surveyor, and the other for an assistant surveyor of buildings. They will both be filled in the usual manner, by competitive examination, held by the Civil Service Commissioners.

ADMIRALTY—THE NAVAL MANŒUVRES—CASUALTIES TO SHIPS.

CAPTAIN COLOMB (Tower Hamlets, Bow, &c.) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, What number of vessels took part in the Naval Manœuvres; how many of these received injuries, or exhibited defects, necessitating repair in a Dockyard; how many received injuries, or exhibited defects, which were remedied at sea by artificers on board; and what was the general character and extent of such injuries or defects in each case?

THE FIRST LORD (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing): Including torpedo boats, 109 vessels took part in these operations, and three vessels only are reported to us as exhibiting defects requiring immediate repairs. Two of these vessels, the *Amphion* and *Curlew*, exhibited defects of such a nature as to necessitate dockyard assistance. Those of the *Collingwood* were repaired by the artificers on board.

ADMIRALTY—THE NAVAL MANŒUVRES — RESERVE BATTLE SHIPS, CRUISERS, &c.

CAPTAIN COLOMB (Tower Hamlets, Bow, &c.) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, What number of battle ships, cruisers, gunboats, and torpedo boats were in reserve at our ports during the Naval Manœuvres; and how many of each description of vessel could be made available for service at sea at one month's notice?

THE FIRST LORD (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing): The Naval Manœuvres practically absorbed all our available battle ships and cruisers in the First Reserve, though there were three gunboats and between 50 and 60 torpedo boats in reserve. Between this date and the end of the financial year there will be ready for commission or in the First Reserve four battle ships, one unarmoured cruiser, five belted cruisers, two protected cruisers, eight unprotected cruisers, one sloop, three torpedo gunboats, and two gunboats. None of these vessels took part in the Review or subsequent operations.

CHARITY COMMISSIONERS — THE CHRIST'S HOSPITAL SCHEME.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, Whether Her Majesty's Government have come to any conclusion with reference to the scheme framed for Christ's Hospital by the Charity Commissioners under the Endowed Schools Act, and submitted to the Education Department in March, 1886; and, what course they intend to pursue with reference to this important Charity?

THE VICE PRESIDENT (Sir WILLIAM HART DYKE) (Kent, Dartford): Various points of great importance in connection with the scheme for Christ's Hospital have been, and are, under consideration; and the Lord President and myself have been in constant communication with the authorities of the Hospital and the Charity Commissioners on the subject. I regret that no final decision has been arrived at; but it will be announced at the beginning of next Session.

CHARITY COMMISSIONERS—NORWICH CHARITIES.

MR. HOARE (Norwich) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, Whether any action has been taken by the Education Department with reference to the schemes proposed by the Charity Commissioners for the administration of certain Norwich Charities?

THE VICE PRESIDENT (Sir WILLIAM HART DYKE) (Kent, Dartford): It is proposed to suspend any action by the Education Department with reference to these schemes, in order to facilitate negotiations between the Charity Commissioners, on the one hand, and the Trustees and Local Authorities on the other, for the modification of their respective proposals for the future administration of these endowments, and to give an opportunity for the inclusion in any substituted schemes of certain loan charities, which it is now impossible to apply to their original objects, and which might with advantage be devoted to educational purposes.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT — CLASSIFICATION OF SCHOLARS BY AGE.

MR. H. J. WILSON (York, W.R., Holmfirth) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, Whether he is aware that, notwithstanding repeated declarations by one or more of his Predecessors in Office that the classification of scholars by age has been abandoned by the Education Department and removed from the Code, some Inspectors practically enforce such classification, particularly in infant schools, and reduce the merit grant in cases where it is not carried out?

THE VICE PRESIDENT (Sir WILLIAM HART DYKE) (Kent, Dartford): I adhere to the declaration made by my

Predecessors in Office; and I am not aware that there is in any case in which the grant has been diminished simply on account of the age of the scholars. If there is any such case known to the hon. Member I shall be glad to be furnished with the particulars.

ADMIRALTY—WRITERS.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether it is a fact that the Admiralty Authorities intend, within two or three months, to get rid of all the writers at present employed by them, with the exception of a few, who are to be placed on the Lower Division?

THE FIRST LORD (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing): The Admiralty, so far as I know, have no intention to get rid of all the writers at present employed by them, with the exception of a few, who are to be placed on the Lower Division. Reductions will have to take place in the clerical establishments, and these will affect the writers as well as the grades above them.

ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY—UNSANITARY STATE OF CERTAIN POLICE BARRACKS, CO. DONEGAL.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether it is a fact that several police barracks or stations in the County of Donegal have been condemned as unsanitary by the medical officers of the County Force; how many have been condemned by the Constabulary Authorities; how long is it since such stations were first condemned; how many constables have died in Donegal in the last six years, and what were the causes of their deaths; is each unmarried constable compelled to pay as barrack rent £2 12*s*. a-year out of his salary; and, by what authority, and on whose representations, is the deduction made?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): In the case of one police barrack only in the County Donegal has the sanitary accommodation been found defective. It was pronounced defective in May last. Steps have been taken to provide a remedy, and are still in progress. There were 12 deaths from disease during the last six years, due to the following causes:—Fever, 4; brain fever, 1; consumption, 4; internal tumour, 1; inflammation of the brain, 1; sudden death, 1. A deduction of 1*s*. a-week, equivalent to £2 12*s*. a-year, is made from the pay of men lodged in barracks. The deduction is made under Section 2 of 46 & 47 *Vict*. c. 14.

POST OFFICE—CENTRAL TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT—NON-PROMOTION OF CLERKS.

MR. P. M'DONALD (Sligo, N.) asked the Postmaster General, Whether it is a fact that at the Central Telegraph Station 12 clerks of 16 years' service and upwards, who have not been passed over for promotion, have been waiting at the top of the first class for 16 months, whereas others of the same rank were promoted after waiting six months; whether the great services rendered by the first class clerks generally were lately acknowledged by him in replying to a Petition presented by them; and, whether he will state definitely if there is any prospect of the 12 clerks above mentioned receiving promotion within the next six months?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): The fact is as stated in the first clause of the Question. As promotions depend to a certain extent on the occurrence of vacancies in higher classes, it is impossible to insure their being made at regular periods, whatever may be the qualifications of those at the top of any class. At the present time there are no vacancies in the class above the first class; and I am not prepared to say that there will be any promotions to that class within the next six months. I had much pleasure recently, in replying to a Petition, to approve of the good conduct which generally characterized the officers of the Central Telegraph Office, and of the improvement in the efficiency of the officers, not only there, but at many other offices throughout the United Kingdom.

HER MAJESTY'S JUBILEE—THE NATIVE INDIAN PRINCES—THE MAHARAJAH HOLKAR.

MR. P. O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether his attention has been called to the comments in the Indian papers on the subject of the recent hasty departure from England of the Maharajah Holkar; whether it has come to his knowledge that there is a widespread dissatisfaction amongst the Indian people in consequence of the way the Native Indian Princes, who attended Her Majesty's Jubilee, are alleged to have been received; and, will the Government take any action in the matter?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JOHN GORST) (Chatham): My attention has not been called to any comments in the Indian papers on the departure of the Maharajah Holkar. It was, I am informed, due to domestic reasons. The Secretary of State has no reason to think that there is any dissatisfaction amongst the people of India at the way in which the Indian Chiefs were received at Her Majesty's Jubilee. On the contrary, he is satisfied that all these Chiefs were much gratified by their reception, and they all expressed themselves to him in the warmest terms to that effect. He does not intend to take any action in the matter.

WAR OFFICE — REGIMENTAL BANDS AT PUBLIC MEETINGS—THE WEST YEOMANRY BAND.

MR. HANDEL COSSHAM (Bristol, E.) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether his attention has been called to the fact that last Monday week the West Yeomanry Band, of which Colonel Wood is Commander, attended and played at a Primrose League Demonstration at Cricket St. Thomas, near Chard, at which Sir A. A. Wood, baronet, presided, and at which Viscount Bridport, Viscount Cross, Sir John Walrond, and others took part?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): The General commanding reports that on the day referred to the band of the West Somerset Yeomanry played at a private garden party at Lord Bridport's; but took no part in the Primrose League demonstration at Cricket St. Thomas.

RAILWAYS (ENGLAND AND WALES)—IMMINENT COLLISION OF A MIDLAND EXPRESS TRAIN.

MR. CHANNING (Northampton, E.) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether the attention of the Board of Trade has been called to the narrow escape of a Midland express train, at an early hour on Sunday morning last, near Normanton, from a serious collision with a North-Eastern fish train, when the express ran past the signals, and the collision was averted by the guard of the express train applying the continuous brake; and, whether the Board of Trade will order an inquiry into the circumstances, and especially as to the competency and qualifications of the engine driver in charge of the express train?

THE SECRETARY (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): The attention of the Board of Trade has not been directed to the incident referred to. They cannot undertake to direct an inquiry in cases where no accident has occurred. I may, however, say that the Board of Trade have received an assurance from the Company that they are taking every precaution to enable them to select the most efficient servants from a large number of applicants.

BOILER EXPLOSIONS — REPUBLICATION OF REPRINTS OF 1885 AND 1886.

MR. HUBBARD (Bucks, N.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, If he will consider the public benefit of a reprint, in a cheaper and condensed form, of the Reports on Boiler Explosions of 1885 and 1886, which, at their present price of £2 and £2 12*s*. 6*d*. respectively, are beyond the reach of the mechanics of the country?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): If my hon. Friend wishes for a reprint of the Reports without the plates I believe that they could be furnished in a cheaper and more condensed form. In any case, I shall be glad to consider any suggestion that he may be good enough to make to me upon the subject.

BURMAH—SALES OF LAND TO PUBLIC OFFICIALS.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether his attention has been called to a telegram from Rangoon, published in *The Times* of the 11th instant, in which it is alleged that the freehold of two lots of Government land, embracing eight and a-half acres in the town of Mandalay, had, in defiance of a Government Rule requiring such lands to be publicly auctioned, been privately sold for £2 10*s*. per acre to Mr. Bridges, Deputy Commissioner at Mandalay, and Mr. Fforde, Superintendent of Police; and that it was believed that other public officials had, in defiance of the Rule, privately purchased public lands in the same town; and, whether it is true that the Government of India has directed an inquiry into the subject; and, if so, whether Papers relating to the inquiry will be laid before Parliament?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JOHN GORST) (Chatham), in reply, said, his attention had been called by the hon. Member's Question to the telegram in *The Times*. The Secretary of State had received no official information from India on the subject; but he had called for an inquiry to be addressed to the Government of India.

CRIMINAL LAW—ISRAEL LIPSKI, CONVICTED OF MURDER.

MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.W.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether representations have been made to him concerning the case of Israel Lipski, now lying under sentence of death; and, whether he can hold out any hope of reprieve?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I must begin my answer by saying that I think it highly inexpedient and injurious to the administration of justice that the circumstances of a criminal case, on which the exercise of the prerogative of mercy depends, should be made the subject of discussion or of Questions in this House. The case of Israel Lipski has been for some days under my most anxious consideration; and the advice I tender to Her Majesty will be made known in due time in the usual manner.

MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM: Is it not a fact that the whole circumstances of this case are very peculiar; that a large number of his fellow-countrymen have petitioned in his favour; and that his extreme youth and his unfortunate surroundings may not weigh in the consideration of his case?

[No reply.]

POST OFFICE (IRELAND) (TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT)—SMITHBOROUGH.

MR. P. O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.) asked the Postmaster General, Under what circumstances it would be necessary, in creating the Post Office in Smithborough, County Monaghan, a telegraph office, to run a wire from Clones to Smithborough; whether, in view of the fact that the wire which connects Belfast with Clones and Enniskillen passes within about 25 perches of the Smithborough Post Office, and that the carrying capacity of this wire is five time its present daily average, he will consider the advisability of taking Smithborough into circuit upon this wire; whether by such an arrangement the £30, which was proposed as a guarantee for a year to cover the cost of extension and any possible loss to the Post Office Revenue arising from working Smithborough Post Office as a telegraph office for that period, will not be more than sufficient to cover the cost of construction in bringing Smithborough into circuit on the Belfast, Clones, and Enniskillen wire, the cost of working for one year, and still leave a moderate balance to the credit of the Post Office, exclusive of the profits arising from the messages originating at and delivered from Smithborough; and, when will he be able to state the result of his inquiries?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): I have to state that to place the Smithborough office upon the Belfast, Clones, and Enniskillen wire would cause delay in the transmission of the messages passing over that circuit, and consequent complaint from the public. Even if the suggestion were desirable, but little saving (if any) would be effected in the amount of the guarantee required; as it would be necessary to increase the allowance to the postmaster, in order that he might be in a position to obtain the services of an assistant competent to work the more difficult instrument which would be placed upon the circuit. I hope to be able to state the result of the further inquiries I promised some day next week.

IRELAND—HAULBOWLINE—ALLEGED CONVERSION OF OATS.

MR. HOOPER (Cork, S.E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether any complaint has been made by the Constabulary stationed at Haulbowline to the authorities there of oats intended for the Public Service having been converted to his private use by an official engaged on the works on the Island; to whom did the oats belong, whether to the Government or the contractor; what has been the result of such complaint; and, whether it has been satisfactory to the Police Authorities; and, if not, will they proceed in the matter before a Civil Court?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.), in reply, said, no complaint had been made by the Constabulary in the matter. The oats belonged to the contractor.

POST OFFICE (IRELAND) (TELEGRAPHIC DEPARTMENT) — "SPECIAL EVENTS."

MR. COX (Clare, E.) asked the Postmaster General, Whether the sum of 5*s.* per diem constitutes the allowance for special telegraphists in Ireland, when absent from headquarters discharging duties known as "Special events;" whether the Postal Circular, of the 19th June, 1883, authorized the payment of 6*d.* per hour to special telegraphists; and, what is the allowance for special telegraphists engaged on corresponding duties in Great Britain?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): The subsistence allowances authorized in the Post Office Circular, of June 19, 1883, apply equally throughout the Service, whether in Great Britain or Ireland; and I am unable to find that any exception has been made in the case of telegraphists in Ireland.

MR. COX asked, whether the Postal Circular referred to authorized the payment of 6*d.* per hour to special telegraphists?

MR. RAIKES said, the Circular authorized the allowance of 6*d.* per hour, or 5*s.* per day, according to the circumstances of each case.

POST OFFICE (SCOTLAND)—GROCERS' SHOPS IN GLASGOW.

MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.W.) asked the Postmaster General, If he is aware that in Glasgow there are at least 20 post offices in licensed grocers' shops; if the custom is general in Scotland; and, if the granting of postal appointments to holders of licences is in accordance with the usual practice of the Office?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): There are not more than six post offices in licensed grocers' shops in the town and district of Glasgow together. The holding of such licences is not regarded as a disqualification, provided that liquor cannot be drunk on the premises. If any very general expression of opinion was to be given as to the undesirableness of having post offices in shops of this description, I should, of course, take it into consideration.

INTERNATIONAL LAW—DESTITUTE ALIENS—IMMIGRATION INTO THE UNITED STATES—ACT OF CONGRESS, 1882.

MR. MUNRO FERGUSON (Leith, &c.) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether the Government has further considered the question of the admission of destitute aliens into this country?

MR. FISHER (Fulham) also asked, Whether the hon. Gentleman's attention has been called to Section 2 of the Act of Congress (3rd August, 1882), regulating immigration into the United States, whereby it is enacted that—

> "If on examination there shall be found . . . . any person unable to take care of himself or herself without becoming a public charge, they (the officers) shall report the same in writing to the collector of such port, and such persons shall not be permitted to land;"

whether his attention has been called to the statement in the Report for 1886 of the Board of Guardians for the relief of the Jewish Poor, that it has been the invariable practice to forward chiefly to America a large number of destitute alien immigrants, and that 888 foreigners were, according to the Report, so emigrated last year; and, whether, having regard to the fact that there is good reason to anticipate the more stringent enforcement of the above Regulation of the United States, thereby increasing the difficulty already experienced of passing on destitute aliens, he will recommend to Her Majesty's Ministers the adoption of Regulations similar, or even stronger, than those enforced by the United States, and will give notice to the Governments of Germany, Russia, and other countries (as Mr. Bayard has recently given Notice to us), that—

> "The exportation of such persons by a Foreign Government will scarcely be regarded as a friendly act,"

and that we shall in future enforce the

"return of such emigrants to their native country?"

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's) said, that he would answer the Questions. The Government had had the matter under their careful consideration. He had no reason to doubt that the statement contained in the Question of the hon. Member for Fulham (Mr. Fisher) was substantially correct; but the Government had no power, under the existing law, to make such a representation as was suggested by his hon. Friend.

MR. MUNRO-FERGUSON gave Notice that on an early day next Session he would call attention to the subject, and move a Resolution.

POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—TELEGRAPH AT MILTOWN MALBAY.

MR. COX (Clare, E.) (for Mr. JORDAN) (Clare, W.) asked the Postmaster General, If, in view of the growing requirements of the district, he has yet decided to supply a better telegraphic instrument to the office in Miltown Malbay, County Clare, than the old A B C now in use there?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): In reply to the hon. Member, I have to state that the question has recently been before me; but as I find, upon inquiry, that the number of messages dealt with upon the circuit (including those not only of Miltown Malbay, but also of Limerick) averaged but seven daily in January, 13 in June, and 24 in August, one of the most busy months in the year, I do not think that the time has yet arrived for making any change in the instruments in use.

POST OFFICE (SCOTLAND) — MAIL SERVICE BETWEEN PORTREE AND STROME.

DR. CLARK (Caithness) asked the Postmaster General, Whether it is the case that the mail steamers from Portree and Stornoway generally arrive at Strome about 9.30 a.m.; that the mail train leaves at 11 o'clock, arriving in Dingwall 40 minutes after the North mail has left, and hence the mails are detained at Dingwall for nearly 24 hours; that the mail train from Strome to Dingwall is a very slow train, taking two hours and 30 minutes for a distance of 53 miles; and, whether he will either arrange for the train to start earlier, or to increase the speed of the train?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): The facts are substantially as set forth in the hon. Member's Question, except, perhaps, that the steamer from Stornoway frequently arrives at Strome Ferry before 9.30 a.m. I shall be very glad if I can arrange with the Railway Company for an acceleration of the train from Strome Ferry, as I have already stated to the House, without incurring an expense which circumstances do not warrant.

DR. CLARK asked, if the right hon. Gentleman had no power under the contract to compel the Railway Company to increase the speed of the train from about 15 to 30 miles an hour?

MR. RAIKES said, he was afraid he had no power to enforce any such acceleration on the Railway Company under the contract.

IRELAND—BELFAST A "CITY."

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, If he is now prepared to recommend to Her Majesty to grant a Charter to Belfast, conferring on it the style and title of "City?"

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): No decision has been come to, and the question is still under the consideration of Her Majesty's Government.

IRELAND—PORT OF BELFAST—COLLECTION OF REVENUE.

MR. EWART (Belfast, N.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether, having regard to the representations made to the Government from time to time by the Harbour Commissioners, the Chamber of Commerce, and other Local Bodies in Belfast on the subject of making it a first-class port, the Government are now prepared to give Belfast, which stands third in the United Kingdom as regards collection of revenue, the advantage of first-class status?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square) (who replied) said: For Customs purposes the ports in the United Kingdom are no longer classified, so it would not be possible, in so many words, to give Belfast the advantage of first-class status. But I understand the hon. Gentleman to ask really that the salary of the collector should be raised from £700 to £800, and that he should have a first-class surveyor under him, instead of second and third-class surveyors, as at Glasgow, Newcastle, and Hull. If the amount of revenue collected were the only criterion by which the staff of a port is fixed, no doubt Belfast would have a staff corresponding to the amount of revenue collected there, but other things have to be taken into consideration; and it is one of these—the amount of foreign trade—which really is the main element in fixing the staff of a port. In this respect Belfast does not approach Hull, Newcastle, or Glasgow, the number of foreign vessels entered inwards and outwards at Belfast being only 437 in 1886, as against 2,471 at Glasgow, 5,218 at Hull, and 9,576 at Newcastle. The trade of Belfast, though very considerable, consists mainly of coasting trade, which is under little or no restriction, and gives the Customs officers little or no trouble, so that a smaller establishment is well capable of dealing with it. Surely it would be wrong, under such circumstances, to increase public expenditure without a real need for it.

TRUSTEE SAVINGS BANKS — "GOVERNMENT SECURITY SAVINGS BANKS."

MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether, in a great number of instances, Trustee Savings Banks are in the habit of calling themselves "Government Security Savings Banks," and otherwise describing themselves in such manner as to lead to the belief that the State is responsible to depositors for their investments; whether there is any guarantee that deposits in Trustee Savings Banks are actually invested in Government Securities; and, whether the Government will prohibit the use of a title or a description which is calculated to mislead and deceive depositors, and intending depositors, in such banks, and thereby cause them to run the risk of losing their hard earned savings?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): Her Majesty's Government have no information as to the number of Trustee Savings Banks which may be in the habit of describing themselves in the manner referred to. I am informed that a case in which a misleading description had been adopted by a savings bank (Monkwearmouth) was recently brought under the notice of the National Debt Commissioners, and a remonstrance was addressed to the Trustees by the Commissioners, who have, however, no legal powers of interference. There is no guarantee that deposits in Trustee Savings Banks are actually invested in Government Securities beyond the responsibilities imposed upon Trustees and Managers of obeying the provisions of the law, which requires them to pay over to the National Debt Commissioners all moneys received from depositors, except moneys deposited for special investment under Section 16 of the Savings Banks Act, 1863. Section 5 of the Act 26 & 27 *Vict.* c. 87 gives the Trustee Savings Banks the privilege of describing themselves under the title of "saving banks certified under the Act of 1863," and prohibits any other Bank or Association from using or adopting such title; but the Act does not forbid the adoption by savings banks of any other title or description. If it should appear that there is, in fact, any widespread misapprehension on the part of depositors in these institutions in consequence of the employment of misleading titles by Trustee Savings Banks, Her Majesty's Government will be ready to consider whether the title expressed in the section of the Act referred to may not be made obligatory to the exclusion of any other.

POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANKS AND GOVERNMENT ANNUITIES BILL — LIMIT OF DEPOSITS.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether he will lay upon the Table of the House the Memorials and other documents received from bankers and others which induced the Government to give up their proposal, in the Post Office Savings Banks Bill, to raise the maximum yearly deposit in Post Office Savings Banks from £30 to £50?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): No, Sir; it is not usual to lay on the Table the Memorials or other documents which the Government may receive under circumstances of this nature. But I must correct the impression my hon. Friend appears to entertain. The Government have not given way to the opposition of the bankers; but the representations they have received from the Trustee Savings Banks made it clear to them that a further opposition would have to be encountered, which, at this period of the Session, might be fatal to the Bill, unless an extension of the limit of deposits from £30 to £50 was conceded to the Trustee Savings Banks. Having regard to the rate of interest paid by Trustee Savings Banks and to other circumstances the Government felt it impossible to concede that demand, and they therefore propose to withdraw the clause.

TRANSFER OF LAND—A ROYAL COMMISSION.

Sir HENRY JAMES (Bury, Lancashire) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether, having regard to the existing uncertainty as to the principles upon which any reform of the law relating to the transfer of land must proceed, the Government will appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the subject of the transfer of land, and also the tenure of estates on land from which the cost and complexity of transfer arise?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): Two Royal Commissions and two Select Committees of this House have considered this question already. One Royal Commission was appointed in January, 1854, and reported in May, 1857; the other was appointed in May, 1868, and reported in November, 1869. One Select Committee was appointed in May, 1853, and reported in August of that year; the other was appointed in May, 1878; it reported the evidence only in July of that year; it was re-appointed in December of the same year, and reported in June, 1879. Having regard to these facts, the Government do not consider that any useful purpose would be served by the appointment of a third Royal Commission now, more especially as they do not themselves feel any uncertainty as to the principles upon which legislation should proceed, and as they have been confirmed in their view by the general approval with which the principle of their measure was received this Session in the House of Lords, as well as by the most eminent Legal Authorities in other quarters.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS, LONDON—PETITION TO HER MAJESTY IN COUNCIL.

Mr. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether a Petition to Her Majesty in Council, a draft of which was published in July last, purporting to be the Petition of the Royal College of Physicians of London and Royal College of Surgeons of England, praying Her Majesty to grant a Charter to a body composed of representatives of these Royal Colleges, to examine for and confer medical degrees, has yet been presented; whether any caveats have been received, or opposition offered, to the purport of such Petition; whether Petitions to Her Majesty in Council, one presented by University College, London, and King's College, London, conjointly, and one by the Association for Promoting a Teaching University for London, praying for the constitution of a London Teaching University, to confer degrees in Arts, Science, Medicine, and other faculties, have been brought to the notice of Her Majesty's Government; whether any opposition has been offered to the prayer of these Petitions; and, what steps Her Majesty's Government propose to take in reference to the prayer of the Petition or Petitions which have been presented?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): No Petition has been presented to the Queen in Council from the Royal College of Physicians of London or the Royal College of Surgeons of England asking for a Charter for a representative body of those Colleges to examine for and confer medical degrees. Caveats have been received in regard to such a Charter from various quarters and from five of the Universities. A Petition to Her Majesty in Council has been received from the University College and King's College, London, conjointly, and also from the Association for Promoting a Teaching University for London in favour of a new University for the London District. The grant of the Charter is opposed by the London University. The Petitions were submitted to the Queen in Council on the 12th of July, and were referred by Her Majesty to a Committee of the Lords of the Council to consider and report thereon. A notice to this effect appeared in *The London Gazette* of the 15th of July; and it is competent for any persons or bodies interested to petition Her Majesty in Council at any time before the 1st of September, and subsequently the whole question will be considered by the Committee.

THE IRISH LAND LAW BILL.

MR. PARNELL (Cork): I wish to ask the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether, in view of the numerous—and some of them grave and one of them vital—Amendments which the House of Lords have made in the Irish Land Bill since he gave Notice of his intention to proceed with the consideration of the Lords' Amendments to-day, and considering also the fact that this House has had no Notice in regard to those Amendments, the right hon. Gentleman still intends to proceed with their consideration at this Sitting, or whether he will not postpone the matter until Monday, so as to give hon. Members an opportunity of seeing the Lords' Amendments?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I endeavoured to ascertain the views of hon. Gentlemen with reference to proceeding with the consideration of the Lords' Amendments this evening.

MR. PARNELL: Before we knew what they were.

MR. W. H. SMITH: It was impossible for me or anyone to know what they would be. And having done so, I think the House will feel that it would be more convenient to consider the Amendments this evening, and also that serious results might occur from delaying the Bill. I apprehend that, ample Notice having been given that arrangements would be made for considering these Amendments to-day, it would be quite within the competence of hon. Gentlemen to give them all the consideration that they require this evening. I have no wish to press unduly upon the House, or upon hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway; but the Government feel that they would be incurring a great responsibility if they delayed the passing of this Bill.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne), with reference to the answer of the right hon. Gentleman, asked, whether he was aware of the fact that the House of Lords proposed to adjourn that day for a fortnight's holiday; and how, if that were so, the adjournment of the consideration of the Amendments to the Irish Land Law Bill could place the Bill in jeopardy?

MR. W. H. SMITH: The hon. Gentleman has better information as to the intention of the House of Lords than I possess.

MR. CONYBEARE: It is so.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

In reply to Mr. BROADHURST (Nottingham, W.) and Mr. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby),

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster) said, that if the Government was fortunate enough to reach the Allotments Bill to-night by 11 o'clock they would proceed with it then; but they did not propose to proceed further to-night than getting the Speaker out of the Chair.

In reply to Mr. JAMES STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton),

MR. W. H. SMITH said, that the Government were under an engagement to take the Irish Civil Service Estimates together, and he hoped they would begin them next week. He was not able to say when the Army and Navy Estimates would be taken; but they would endeavour to meet the convenience of the House. He could not at present bind himself as to the relative order in which the Votes would be taken.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby) asked, what Business it was proposed to proceed with on Tuesday and Wednesday?

MR. W. H. SMITH said, it was the intention of the Government to take the Coal Mines, &c. Regulation Bill on Monday. If they were so fortunate as to finish the Committee stage on that Bill on Monday, they would take Supply on Tuesday and Wednesday; but, in the meantime, he left those days open, because they conceived it to be of the highest importance that the Coal Mines, &c. Regulation Bill should be passed through Committee.

TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION BILL.

In reply to Mr. C. T. D. Acland (Cornwall, Launceston),

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster) said, so much depended on the progress of the Coal Mines, &c. Regulation Bill that he was unable to say whether they should be able to proceed with the Technical Instruction Bill on Tuesday. The Government was very anxious to pass the Bill, and he hoped the hon. Member would not press for any specific arrangement.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

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IRISH LAND LAW BILL.—[Bill 355.]

(*Mr. A. J. Balfour.*)

CONSIDERATION OF LORDS' AMENDMENTS TO COMMONS' AMENDMENTS.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Lords' Amendments to the Commons' Amendments be now considered."—(*Mr. A. J. Balfour.*)

Mr. PARNELL (Cork): I was expecting that the First Lord of the Treasury would have made some statement to the House as to the intentions of the Government with regard to one or more disagreements of the Lords to the Amendments in this Bill which were made by this House; and I think, Sir, that such a statement was the more necessary in view of the fact that a vital Amendment has been made in Clause 23 in "another place" on the Motion of the Ministerial Peer in charge of the measure, and evidently by concert with Her Majesty's Government. That is a fact, Sir, which places this House and all those who are interested in this Bill in a very difficult position. We had supposed that the Bill as it went through this House, partly by compromise, and certainly by the abandonment upon our part and upon the part of the Opposition generally of their right to press many vital Amendments, would have been accepted by the Government as the final result so far as this Bill was concerned; and certainly it was the last thing in the world that I expected to find that Lord Cadogan, who had official charge of this measure, should have moved an Amendment of so vital and important a description as that now sent down. I do not exaggerate when I say I regard this Amendment as one which will diminish at least by one-half the value of the Bill to the Irish tenants. It appears to me to fly in the face of all equity and justice, and to be in distinct contradiction of the statements of the Government when the clause was under discussion in this House, and in distinct contradiction of the arguments by which they resisted our arguments. Then it was agreed that full discretion should be left to the Land Commission; but now since the Bill has been taken to "another place" the Land Commission are to be tied up and bound down in such a way as will make it absolutely impossible for than as regards the clause for readjustment of judicial rents to do any sort of justice to the Irish tenants. I had regarded that clause for the readjustment of judicial rents as of a more important and vital character than even the Leaseholders' Clause, and I have discouraged all attempts while the Bill was passing through Committee in this House to put any undue pressure upon the Government in respect of Amendments of a less important character—Amendments which the Government claimed, and probably might fairly claim, should not be pressed. But as regards the question of this readjustment of judicial rents, I have always held it to be the most vital question in connection with the present agrarian situation; and I cannot for a single moment be a party to this tampering with the settlement arrived at in this House, this tampering which was adopted in "another place" on the Motion of Lord Cadogan. Sir, the question of binding the Land Commissioners down by a hard-and-fast-line to re-adjust rents only in the same proportion as the variation in prices is one which strikes at the root of any possibility of settling the agrarian question in Ireland. It was very well pointed out during the debates in Committee in this House that if prices fall 10 per cent a diminution of 10 per cent on some holdings would be too little and on other holdings would be too much, and that the Land Commission would have to take into their consideration the systems of cultivation adopted in different districts, and settle their averages accordingly. But if you put pastoral holdings in the County of Meath, as Lord Cadogan has done, on a level with the tillage holdings in the County of Tyrone, you give to the grazing tenants of Meath an advantage which they are not entitled to, and you take away from the tillage tenants of Londonderry and of Tyrone the advantage to which they are absolutely and more justly entitled. I cannot imagine, Sir, upon what principle the Lords have proceeded in this matter. I was not aware that it was their desire to unsettle this question and prevent the settlement arrived at in this House after infinite trouble and much time being given to obtain fair play. But so far as I have been able to see and to estimate the effects of the Lords' Amendment I would say this—that having regard to the fact that the leaseholders under the Bill as it left this House are deprived of the right of claiming for their improvements the same right which the ordinary yearly tenants possess under the Land Act of 1881, and that now, under Lord Cadogan's Amendment, fully one-half of the benefit which the judicial tenants of Ireland might have reasonably anticipated in the operation of this Bill will have been taken away from them. I think, Sir, and it is my deliberate opinion, that it would be no loss at all to the Land Question or to Ireland if this Bill were postponed for another Session; and if the result of protracted opposition to these Amendments is to postpone the Bill for another Session, all I can say is that I wash my hands of the responsibility—a responsibility which will have been thrown upon us at this end of the Session by an example of, perhaps, the most unjustifiable action, having regard to all the circumstances and the circumstances under which the Bill passed, which the Lords have ever taken even with regard to Ireland. Now, Sir, the action of the right hon. Gentleman in forcing these Amendments on to-night is of another character. The right hon. Gentleman said in reply to my Question that he had consulted the usual channels of information; but, Sir, when he consulted the usual channels of information we had no inkling whatever that Lord Cadogan's Amendment was going to be proposed, much less accepted, or that this Amendment was arrived at after mature deliberation as a Ministerial Amendment. Surely, with this knowledge in their possession, the Government ought to have informed their opponents when initiating this consultation what their intentions were. We did not for a moment suppose that anything more than the ordinary Amendments which had been foreshadowed in the newspapers would have been insisted on. If we had known this settlement, arrived at after such pains, was to be half of it at least undone, the position would have been very different, and we should have claimed from the Government fair time to consider this Amendment and to invite the Members of the House of Commons who are absent to attend in their places in order to discuss the question. Now, Sir, I trust that the Government in the discussion which I suppose will follow will ease our minds in respect to one or two points—that either they will tell us that they do not propose to adhere to Lord Cadogan's Amendment, or else that they will tell us that they will give an adjournment of the debate till Monday. I think, Sir, I am entitled to claim this from every point of view as regards the number of the Amendments and the important character of one or two of them as far as we can see. The questions raised in many of the Amendments, I am not, I confess, sufficiently informed upon. In the short time at my disposal I had to run over them hastily, and I confess I am not able to appreciate their gravity, or weight, or want of weight, so far as to fully understand them. But I look upon the one Amendment which I have particularly singled out as being an Amendment of a vital character, and one to which I wish to direct the attention of the House and the Government. I trust the right hon. Gentleman will give us satisfactory assurances on the points I have named.

The CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.) said, the hon. Member's speech had partly been directed towards the substance of an Amendment introduced in the Lords and partly to a severe criticism—he would not say attack—on the conduct of the Government in allowing the Amendment to be adopted; and he had complained that no adequate Notice had been given to the Opposition of the fact that this important Amendment was to be introduced in the Lords. Now, he admitted that the latter point had occurred to him, and he had taken some pains to find out something about it. The Government were extremely anxious to proceed speedily with the Bill, not only for their own convenience, but also for the sake of the good government of Ireland, and especially for the benefit of the tenants. They had constantly pressed this Bill forward because there were evictions pending, and if these evictions were carried out before the Bill was passed the tenants could not derive any benefit from it, but if it were passed before the evictions the tenants would have the full benefit of the Equitable Clauses. The Government took means to satisfy themselves that the course they were adopting was not inconvenient to hon. Gentlemen opposite below the Gangway. The Amendment introduced by Earl Cadogan the hon. Member rightly regarded as a Government Amendment, and not as an Amendment introduced in consequence of discussion, or as a compromise following the interchange of opinion; and the Government did not shrink from the position they had taken in introducing the Amendment. They maintained emphatically that the Amendment in no sense altered the substance of the clause as it left this House; but it explained and put it in clear, unmistakable, and precise language what in the opinion of the Government was and always would have been the natural operation of the clause. But it did no more than that. He admitted that for the Government to introduce even explanatory words into this clause demanded some justification; and that justification he would give. By this clause Parliament handed over to three gentlemen in Dublin the settlement of the agricultural income of everybody connected with the land in Ireland, either as owner or as occupier. They were made practically a triumvirate of dictators to settle interests of gigantic magnitude. It was not surprising, therefore, that the three gentlemen should shrink from a responsibility so prodigious and unexampled, which had never been placed on any tribunal in the world in the same manner, and that they should ask that in justice to themselves Parliament should be put in the clearest, the most unmistakable, and the most precise form the exact intentions which animated the Legislature in passing this clause. The Commissioners communicated their views on this point to the Government; they said—

> "Considering the enormous responsibility thrown on the Court by the proposal with regard to the temporary remission of judicial rents now before Parliament, we are of opinion that some precise guidance should be given in the Act of Parliament as to the nature of the principle to be applied."

He presumed that a request of that kind was not one which any Government could take upon themselves the responsibility of disregarding.

Mr. PARNELL: Will the right hon. Gentleman read on?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: "Signed, John O'Hagan, E. F. Litton, Frederick Wrench."

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): Will the right hon. Gentleman give the date of the letter?

Mr. PARNELL: Were the Commissioners consulted as to the words of Lord Cadogan's Amendment beforehand?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said, he was not going to enter into other questions. He had explained to the House the opinion — in his view a most natural opinion—which the Commissioners entertained of the responsibility thrown upon them by the words of the clause which, although it was tolerably clear, they thought ought to be developed in a more precise manner. This request was one which the Government could not venture to refuse when they were throwing on the Court a new and unique responsibility. Right hon. Gentlemen opposite, if they had been in a position of responsibility with regard to Ireland, could not have ventured to disregard such a representation. This was why the Government felt themselves compelled to introduce the explanatory words moved by Earl Cadogan. He did not wish at this stage to go minutely into the merits of the Amendment. What it did was to substitute a produce rent for a money rent. In other words, it required the tenants in the year 1887 to give to the landlords in the form of rent the same amount of produce as they would have given in 1882, 1883, and 1884. It did not matter what agricultural commodity he chose for the purpose of illustration; but let them suppose that the produce of a farm was oats. If the rent in 1882 or 1883 had been a produce rent—*i.e.*, payable in the form of so many bushels of oats, then, by the Amendment introduced in the House of Lords, that method of payment was practically extended to the present year. In other words, the tenant had to pay the same amount of oats to his landlord; but, of course, the landlord got a less money value, because oats had fallen in value, and he got a less amount of value in exact proportion to the fall in the value of oats.

Mr. PARNELL: But suppose that he had only five bushels to the acre instead of 10?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said, the hon. Gentleman forgot that the one contention made in favour of altering judicial rents was not that there had been any alteration in the quantity of produce, but that there had been a fall in the prices of that which was produced. It was on the same ground that the temporary abatement of judicial rents had been advocated. Therefore, when he claimed for this Amendment which had come from the Lords that it substituted a produce rent for a money rent he claimed for it that it did away with the grievance which had been complained of in judicial rents—namely, that they were fixed at a time when agricultural prices were higher than they were now. Nor would the tenants of Ireland suffer by the change as compared with the revision of rent by the Sub-Commissioners. Looking at the remissions made last month by the Sub-Commissioners he believed that the alterations under the amended clause of the Bill would be quite as great as, if not greater than, they would be if the judicial rents fixed before 1885 were entirely set aside. If Irish Members desired that temporary abatements of rents should be on a much larger scale than alterations made by the Sub-Commissioners, he would not ask them whether that would be just or unjust to the landlords, but he would ask whether it was a method by which peace and contentment could be produced in Ireland. If tenants who had not yet gone into Court and leaseholders who had not been allowed to go were to have their reductions fixed upon a wholly different scale from the tenants who had them fixed before 1885, would not that produce a condition of discontent and irritation in Ireland which would go far to neutralize the remedial effects that were hoped for from this measure? He should be prepared to go into minute examination of the argument the hon. Member had adumbrated in his speech; but he would not do it now. When the hon. Member said he regarded it as a matter of indifference whether the Bill passed this Session or next Session, he would ask him whether he was prepared to tell the tenantry of Ireland that they were not to have the advantages they would derive from the clauses that provided for the stay of evictions and the distribution of arrears over such a period as the County Court might think fit? Was he also going to deprive them of the revision of judicial rents and of the Equitable Clauses, and was he going to exclude leaseholders from the benefits of the 1st clause? Was he going to say that the tenants now under judicial rents should have no remission for an indefinite period? Was he going to deprive great classes of tenants of remission of rent at least as great as they would derive from any provisions such as he proposed last year or such as he placed upon the Paper this year providing that judicial rents should be again revised by the Commission and the Land Commissioners? He did not venture to measure the responsibility of the hon. Member for Cork in this matter; but he did say that if the tenantry of Ireland really understood what it was that hon. Gentlemen opposite were doing, and how great the advantages were which they would be deprived of through the Parliamentary action of their Representatives, then the hon. Member for Cork would go far to destroy the influence and the popularity which, without doubt, he at present possessed among the tenants in Ireland.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby) said, that they had listened to one of the most extraordinary statements that had ever been made by a responsible Minister of the Crown with reference to the course adopted by a Government in respect of a Bill of first-rate importance. What had happened? After long and careful deliberation in that House a Bill had been settled, and certainly no one could doubt that the most important and most vital portion of that Bill was the clause with reference to the revision of rents. They had heard, day after day, from the First Lord of the Treasury, that he could not brook an hour's delay in the passing of this Bill, and that the peace of Ireland depended upon its being passed in 24 hours. Well, that Bill went up out of the House of Commons, and they all remembered the hurry and the skurry with which the most vital question was despatched within half-an-hour on Saturday afternoon. The Government might be said, he thought, without disrespect to that Assembly, to have a pretty fair control of the proceedings in the House of Lords. This Government, who were so anxious to pass this Bill, as the peace of Ireland depended on its passing in 24 hours, did not think it worth while to summon their Lordships to consider the Bill until Thursday; they did not mind wasting four days in the House of Lords. The House of Lords had other things to think of besides the peace of Ireland, and Thursday was good enough for them. He had been very much interested to know what Amendments were to be moved in the other House; but it did not enter into his mind that the Government contemplated stabbing their own measure in the back in the House of Lords. He wished to know what the Irish landlords were going to move themselves in the House of Lords. He tried in the proper quarters to get some knowledge of those Amendments, and his information was that that House—even the House of Lords—did not know what Amendments were going to be moved till an hour and a-half before their sitting. That was the deliberate way in which the House of Lords disposed of a measure of this description. Then the Chief Secretary for Ireland had told the House that the Amendment did not affect the substance of the Bill, and that it was only an explanation. What a method for the First Lord of the Treasury, who wanted to facilitate the progress of this Bill, to adopt—to go for an explanation of a vital clause to the House of Lords! But was this an Amendment which was only an explanation and not an actual substance? In his mind, this Amendment was a matter of such vital substance that it destroyed the whole value of the clause and the whole value of the Bill. He hardly required the knowledge and experience of the hon. Member for Cork to enable him to come to the conclusion that it made the Bill worthless. They were told that the Amendment was presented by the Land Commissioners in Dublin; but why was not that stated to the House of Lords? The proceedings of the Government were most mysterious and past finding out. It was a sound rule that when correspondence was produced the whole of it should be brought forward. What he wanted to know was what the Government wrote to the Commissioners before the Commissioners wrote to them? Had the Government asked the Commissioners what sort of remissions the tenants would get; had they found that the remissions would be larger than they had expected; and had this Amendment been introduced to prevent them being made too large? He had been some years in that House, and he was not aware that when they passed a Statute which the Judges had to administer, the Judges ever wrote suggesting alterations in this way. If the Amendment was merely explanatory, the course the Government had taken was the most clumsy he had ever heard of. If, on the other hand, the proposal was a vital and fundamental alteration of a Bill which had been settled in the House of Commons, he could tell the Government that they were only at the beginning of this discussion; and if the Government had explained to the Commissioners how they wished the Bill to be administered, surely hon. Members from Ireland must be entitled to give their explanation. He was amazed at the Chief Secretary saying that the Amendment would give all and more than all that had ever been proposed in an entire revision of rents. Let them suppose that a rent had been fixed in 1882 a great deal too high at the then prices; how did they give a remedy for that by simply altering the rent according to the scale of prices? It was no remedy at all. A mere reduction, according to scale, would do nothing at all. What they understood was that there would be a large and free discretion left to the Commissioners to deal with the matter according to the equity of the case. But the Government had found out what that meant, and they had determined to withdraw the grant which they professed to have made. That, in his opinion, was the real reason for the Amendment. If it was a mere explanation, why then let it be clear and pass the Bill; but if it was of a very different character, and the Government persisted in it, it seemed to him that they were entering upon a sea of trouble. The Chief Secretary for Ireland, he thought not very discreetly, threatened the hon. Member for Cork with a loss of his popularity in rejecting this Amendment.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: No; I beg the right hon. Gentleman's pardon. I said if he caused by Parliamentary action the Bill to be lost.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: Who was it that was losing the Bill? If the Government had stuck to their guns in the House of Lords things would have been different. But the great difficulty which they had with the combined Unionist Party on both sides was that they put down clauses and Amendments and then took measures to defeat them. They made a grand concession, and then got the Privy Seal to knock it on the head in the House of Lords. This farce had been gone through during all the proceedings on this Bill. What was the explanation that had been offered by the Prime Minister? Did he tell the people of Ireland that the Bill was a measure of justice which the Government, on their conviction, had offered to Ireland as a measure of peace? Not at all. He said it was a Bill of which he disapproved; which contained germs of evil which he had always denounced. The fashionable germ theory was introduced. In ordinary cases when a doctor saw germs of a disease he endeavoured to get rid of them; but this political doctor endeavoured to multiply them by passing a measure which he said contained germs of evil. Did Lord Salisbury say—"I sympathize with your sufferings and I am ready to redress your wrongs?" Not at all. He said—"I dislike this Bill; I hate this Bill; I would not give this Bill if I could help it; but it is necessary for me to buy the votes of Ulster." That was the political morality of the Conservative Party. Lord Salisbury said—"I want the votes of Ulster, that they may go against the votes of the majority of the Irish nation; and therefore I will give the tenants of Ireland that which I do not approve or believe to be just." Was that the way to earn the respect of the Irish people? But there was another class, the landlords of Ireland. What did he say to the landlords of Ireland—this great moralist, the Prime Minister of England? Did he say—"I call upon you, indeed, to make great and painful sacrifices. They are sacrifices the burden of which I understand; but I believe they are just; that they are concessions which you ought to make to your tenants in humanity and justice?" Not at all. What Lord Salisbury said was this—"I know that these are unjust demands made upon principles which I cannot approve, involving a system of legislation which I conceive to be detestable; but I will mulct you of hundreds and thousands of pounds because it is necessary for me to buy the Ulster votes." What a remarkable thing that we should have had in both Houses of Parliament on the same night declarations from two of the principal Members of Her Majesty's Government that they were supporting two Bills, both of them affecting the land, and that both Bills were framed upon principles abhorrent to their nature; that in order to buy political support they were ready to support the measures; but that they would be traitors to their consciences if they did not denounce their principles. These were the political ethics of the high-flown moralist of the Exchequer and of the Foreign Office. These were the principles which were going to command the respect of the Irish nation and the support of the English people. In his opinion they would do neither the one nor the other. This Bill had one thing, and only one thing, which was good in it, and that was the clause the Government had taken the trouble to destroy. They had left open, unfortunately, one grievance which he had hoped, from the conversation last Saturday, the Government would have remedied in the House of Lords, especially after the invitation of the right hon. Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain). There was a Liberal Unionist who proposed an Amendment which would have done justice. He held his noble Friend the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) personally responsible for having destroyed at the last moment all hope when he came forward and hardened the heart of the Government to refuse accommodation on this subject. He was bound to say that the unfortunate gentleman who was put forward to move the Amendment had the courage to vote for it; but how many of the Liberal Unionists came forward to support it? [An hon. Member: Seven.] Only three on Saturday. But there was one voice they would like to hear on this Amendment from the Lords. Where was the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell)? He wondered whether the hon. Member would say that the interests of Ulster, which were so sacred, so dear to him, had been protected by the Government, and that he believed the explanation which had been given about the alteration in the clause, which was of vital consequence to the people of Ireland. Where was the hon. Member, that he might tell the House what he thought of what had been done about the town parks? They heard the hon. Member for South Tyrone the other night get up and glorify this Bill and the Government of which he was so obedient and humble a supporter. Where was the hon. Member now? He believed the hon. Member was canvassing for the Government somewhere in Cheshire. What did the people of South Tyrone think of that? He did not know how far the hon. Member for South Londonderry (Mr. Lea) was satisfied with the changes. The hon. Member for South Tyrone had said that there would not be a single town park in South Tyrone which would not be relieved by the Bill. All that was knocked on the head, while the hon. Member was canvassing in Northwich. That was the way Liberal Unionists played fast and loose with the principles they professed and the constituents they represented. He protested against the manner in which this Bill had been dealt with. The Government could have done with it what they liked in the House of Lords. They were like the potter—they had the clay in their hands, and could mould it as they pleased. But they had refused to make any provision for the arrears of exorbitant rents; they had knocked on the head the clause for the temporary readjustment of rents. They had, in spite of the Report of the Cowper Commission, practically excluded town parks from the Act of 1881; and, in his opinion, from the Amendments made in he House of Lords, the Bill, as had been said by the hon. Member for Cork, was hardly worth having or taking. As o the appeal made by the hon. Member for Cork, the view of the hon. Member and his Friends ought to prevail as to the time when this measure should be discussed. If the Government thought they would do any good in Ireland by rushing this Bill through the House of Commons as they had rushed it through the House of Lords, with these Amendments, they would be entirely mistaken. They might just as well not pass this Bill at all as pass it under circumstances in which it could be said, and would be justly said, that they had not given the Representatives of Ireland an opportunity of considering these Amendments, and moving others which they might think fit. The right hon. Gentleman deplored the delaying of the Bill; but the delay was entirely due to the conduct of the Government in attacking the measure in its most vital provision, bringing it down in hot haste, and expecting it to be passed without reflection or deliberation.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster) said, he would not refer to the description which the right hon. Gentleman opposite had given of the motives which influenced the Prime Minister and the Government in proposing a measure which they believed to be necessary for the peace of Ireland, and which they had designed with the sole object of doing justice to all interests in that country. The representations made by the right hon. Gentleman were precisely in his usual vein, and the country would know how to appreciate them. The Government were accustomed to misrepresentations of their motives and of the course which they followed. The right hon. Gentleman laid great stress upon what he spoke of as the fundamental alteration made in the Bill by the House of Lords. The Government absolutely denied that there was any alteration in spirit or substance made in the Bill by the House of Lords. They had given a complete explanation of the circumstances in which it had been made, and they would be wanting in their duty to Parliament and the country, and especially to the tenantry of Ireland, if they had not introduced words which they believed would carry out all the intentions of Parliament, and certainly all the intentions the Government had in proposing this Bill. Those words were justified by the discussions which had taken place in Parliament, by the Report of the Cowper Commission, and by all the experience that had been gained with regard to the adjustment of rents during the last 12 months. His right hon. Friend had explained the matter so thoroughly and so ably that he did not think it necessary that he should travel over the same ground again. He asserted that under this provision, as guarded in the clause which had come down from the House of Lords, the tenant would gain everything that it was intended he should have or that he expected to have, and that it would secure a temporary abatement of rent equal to all expectations. The right hon. Gentleman had talked about buying political support. The right hon. Gentleman was, no doubt, endeavouring to buy political support by casting to the winds all his former protestations, and by posing as the friend of those who only a few months ago he denounced in every part of England and in that House. The Government were indifferent to the opprobrium which the right hon. Gentleman was anxious to cast upon them, if they were simply able to do their duty by the people of Ireland and by the people of the United Kingdom and as Ministers of the Crown. The Government had a great responsibility imposed upon them, and they were not inclined to buy support by promising concessions and boons to those to whom they had no right to give more than in justice they were entitled to receive. The right hon. Gentleman had reproached the Government because no provision dealing with the arrears of rent had been introduced into this Bill; but did he remember that the proposal made on Saturday by his right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary for Ireland was distinctly repudiated by hon. Members below the Gangway opposite speaking on behalf of Ireland, and was declared to be worthy of determined hostility? He (Mr. W. H. Smith) denied that the House of Lords, by the introduction of these changes in the Bill, had in the slightest degree injured the Bill itself. Was the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby going to consider as useless a Bill which admitted 110,000 leaseholders to judicial rents, which placed them in the position of the ordinary tenants of Ireland, which entitled every tenant subject to notice of eviction to have that eviction stayed, and which permitted every tenant whose judicial rent had been fixed prior to 1885 to obtain a temporary abatement? If the right hon. Gentleman was of opinion that such a Bill was worthless, that it mattered little whether it passed this Session or not, then the right hon. Gentleman was assuming a responsibility far greater than any that had been assumed by any individual in that House before.

Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.) said, that the right hon. Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) had made a charge of omission as well as of commission against the Government. The right hon. Gentleman had charged it with having neglected to take the opportunity offered to them in the House of Lords of introducing some clause dealing with the arrears of rent. The First Lord of the Treasury had dealt partially with that charge; but as the right hon. Gentleman had referred to the part he (Mr. J. Chamberlain) took in the matter, he should like to say a few words upon it. It was pointed out on Saturday that the Bankruptcy Clauses had been withdrawn, but that the tenant was left without relief from arrears of rent, or if he were insolvent from the embarrassment of his other debts; and he (Mr. J. Chamberlain) suggested that it might be possible to submit some other plan which adopted the principle the Government laid down, and which would relieve the tenant without his going to bankruptcy. His right hon. Friend the Member for Derby, speaking after him, said that although his suggestion was not so good as theirs, which was that the Bill should give power to deal with the arrears of rent only, he thought it ought to be accepted, and for himself and his hon. Friends he would accept it if the Government were prepared to deal with it. The Chief Secretary for Ireland, on behalf of the Government, said they were prepared to accept any such suggestion, provided that all the debts of the tenant were dealt with in the same way and at the same time.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT said, he stated that if the plan of the Government meant the revival of the Bankruptcy Clauses under another name, he would have nothing to do with it, and he came to the conclusion, after hearing the speech of the Chief Secretary, that the proposal was a revival of the Bankruptcy Clauses.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said, he had offered on behalf of the Government to adopt any reasonable plan by which the debts of all creditors should be treated alike and on the same basis. So far, undoubtedly, that was a proceeding in bankruptcy; but he expressed his perfect readiness to drop the name of "bankruptcy," and he said he would adopt as cheap and simple a machinery as could be devised consistent with an equitable arrangement.

Mr. PARNELL said, the Irish Members were willing to agree that where an action was brought against a tenant by landlord or shopkeeper, the County Court Judge should have power to deal with such actions simultaneously, and treat them in the same way; but they were not willing that when actions were brought by the landlord procedure should be adopted which would compel other creditors who had not brought actions to come into Court also.

Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN said, that his proposal on Saturday was that when the tenant was brought into Court, whether for arrears of rent or for the debt of another creditor, if his debts were of small amount the Court should be allowed to call for a schedule of all his creditors and to direct them to enter into a composition, payable by such instalments as the Court might think fit. It was after he had made that suggestion that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby said he thought it ought to be accepted. Then the question arose whether the Irish Members would accept the clause without undue discussion; and upon that the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon), speaking on their behalf, refused to accept the arrangement, but said that they were quite willing to deal with other creditors as well as with the arrears of rent as the cases of each were brought into Court, but that they would not agree to the simultaneous treatment of all debts. He hoped the hon. Member for East Mayo would admit the correctnes of his statement.

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.) replied, that he had only one correction to make, and it was of slight importance. What he said was that the Irish Members insisted that the debts should be dealt with when the creditors came into Court.

Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN submitted that it was perfectly clear, whatever the intention of the hon. Member might be, that they could not have a simultaneous dealing with all debts. It was absurd to suppose that at one stroke all the creditors, acting independently, would come into Court at the same time with their debts. What would happen would be that either the landlord or a single creditor would come into Court, that thereupon the Court would make a composition, leaving all the other debts to be dealt with subsequently from time to time in a series of proceedings, as the several claims were brought into Court. What he wanted to point out was this—that the suggestion which he ventured to make, which the Government were willing to accept, and which the right hon. Member for Derby, on behalf of himself and his Friends, thought ought to be accepted, was refused on behalf of the Irish Members by the hon. Member for East Mayo. Therefore he said—and he was going to Ireland to say it, and he was glad, therefore, to say it in their presence first—that the whole responsibility for refusing to the tenants of Ireland this enormous boon was wholly upon the hon. Members who professed specially to represent the Irish tenants.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: I also refused it.

Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN said, he should be sorry to detract in the slightest degree from the importance of his right hon. Friend. He said he refused it.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: The moment I heard the statement of the Chief Secretary I said we would have nothing to do with it.

Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN said, he thought the House would agree that when his right hon. Friend spoke there was very little difficulty in hearing him. He did not hear him refuse that offer, and he did not know whether any other Member of the House did. He should have been very glad, then, if the Government had been able to deal with this matter; but he agreed that it was quite impossible for them to do so in view of the threat of persistent opposition raised to the only suggestion which it was possible for them to adopt. Now with regard to the important change which had been made in the House of Lords in the clause dealing with revision of rent, his right hon. Friend took two objections on the merits. He said, in the first place, that, as the clause was now worded, it would not admit of a revision of rents which might have been unfair at the time they were fixed. But that was a perfectly new contention on the part of his right hon. Friend. All these debates had proceeded on the assumption that at the time the rents were fixed by the Court they must be taken to have been fair rents. Otherwise it was nonsense to refer to a Court to refix rents when they declared that the Court had already shown itself unable to fix fair rents in the first instance. If they might be guided by the Report of the Cowper Commission, there was no pretence in that Report for the argument that it was desirable to revise rents except in relation to the fall in prices. The first objection, he submitted, fell to the ground; it was a perfectly new one evolved from the inner consciousness of his right hon. Friend, and he thought that, on further reflection, he would see that no importance was to be attached to it. Then his right hon. Friend went on to say that a reduction of rent which was determined by the fall in prices was insufficient because, as the fall in prices affected the whole produce of the farm, the reduction of rent ought to be much greater than the proportionate fall in produce. Now, that was a fallacious or at least a very incomplete statement of the facts. He remembered the hon. Member for East Mayo having charged him with having declared that the reduction of rent ought to be exactly the same as the reduction in prices. He had never said anything of the kind. What he had said was that the reduction of prices was shown by the Cowper Commission to be on the average 18 per cent; and, further, he stated that the Cowper Commission also showed that in recent fixings of rent the Commissioners had given reductions from 10 to 14 per cent, and in some cases even more above what they gave in the earlier fixings. From that, no doubt, he gathered that in any abatement of rent which might be made in consequence of the fall in prices it was probable that the reduction in the rent would be not very different from the percentage shown in the reduction in prices. But that was not necessarily the case. He would point out to the hon. Member for East Mayo why the reduction in prices ought not to extend over the whole produce and be deducted from the rent. There were three reasons, in his opinion, against such a course. In the first place—and this was the least important—it was only fair that in crises of this kind the loss should be shared by all parties, and he did not think it had ever been contended, even by the Irish Members, that the whole should fall on the landlord. The second reason was this—if it were true that all prices had fallen, then the tenant had an advantage in everything he bought. In seed, in meal, in everything he had to buy he got the full advantage, and that advantage ought to be deducted from the disadvantage which only accrued from that portion of the produce which he sold himself. And that was the third point—what you had to look at in fixing the rent was not the total amount of produce, but the total amount which was sold off the farm, because it was only on that portion of his stock and produce that he sold off the farm that he suffered by the fall in prices. On that account it appeared to him that nothing could be more unfair than to say, as he thought the hon. Member for East Mayo did, that the rent of a farm was only equal to one-third of the produce, and that, therefore, the reduction in the rent ought to be three times the amount of the percentage of the fall in prices. Any calculation of that kind would be grossly unfair. He had dealt, then, with the two principal grounds upon which, on the merits, his right hon. Friend had condemned this Amendment of the House of Lords. But though he could not follow his reasoning, he confessed he was also sorry that this Amendment had been introduced. He could not feel satisfied that the Government were right in their contention that it made no practical change in the operation of the Bill. If it did not it would have been much better not to have passed it, and he could not doubt that the fact that it had been introduced carried with it the inference that some very considerable change would be introduced in consequence. He could not but point out to the House what, at all events, was the nature of the change which this alteration would bring about. In the clause as it stood a large discretion was given to the Court, and as the hon. Member for Cork had very well pointed out, it might well be that the fall in prices which would justify the equivalent reduction of rent in one district in Ireland would not justify so great a reduction in another. As between different classes of tenants the Amendment might effect most considerable injustice. It might be that it would make no difference at all as to the average of reduction, but undoubtedly it would make a very great difference indeed in favour of those pasture tenants in Meath to whose case the hon. Member for Cork had alluded, and against those tenants in other parts whose circumstances demand larger consideration. He confessed he was under the impression that it was the desire of the Government and the House to leave a very large discretion to the Court in dealing with this matter; and he thought it was clearly the right course for the House to take. He did not think the House was competent in a matter so complicated to adopt any unbending rule of reduction throughout the whole of Ireland. If they were, it would be a much simpler thing, instead of a reference to prices, to have adopted the principle of saying that there should be in all the judicial rents fixed previous to 1885 one uniform reduction of 15 or 18 or even 20 per cent. He preferred greatly, then, to leave a large discretion to the Court rather than to tie them up, as this Amendment would do, to adopt the fall in prices uniformly as the one determining factor in the reduction of rents. He would venture to ask the Government to tell the House clearly, in the first place, what was the object which they desired to attain by means of this Amendment. He understood the Land Commissioners had come forward to say that as the Bill was drawn it did not give them sufficient guidance, and he was, perhaps, not wrong in imagining that they felt, if they were to be guided by a strict interpretation of the words of the clause as it left the House, that the result would be that while in some cases, perhaps, they might be unable to do as much as they would like for the tenant, yet—and this was the real point—in other cases they would feel themselves compelled to give to a tenant under this clause a larger abatement and a greater reduction than would be the equivalent of the new rent which they would fix to the tenant who came into Court in 1885. That was to say, to two tenants in exactly the same position—one having his rent fixed in 1882, and another who had not yet applied for a reduction of rent who would come into Court in 1887—they would think it necessary to give an abatement in the case of the first tenant which would leave his rent considerably below the new rent which they were going to fix for the tenant who came into Court in 1887. He did not know whether he appreciated the position, but he thought that would be the difficulty of the Land Commissioners which the Government were trying to meet. If that were the case, clearly the operation of the clause as it originally stood would bring about a state of things not contemplated by the House, not fair to a certain class of tenants, and certainly not fair to a certain class of landlords. But he did not like the method with which it was proposed to meet the difficulty. There appeared to him to be two alternative methods which might, perhaps, be taken into consideration by the House. One alternative would be instead of limiting the discretion of the Court to leave a larger discretion to it. If the Court found that it was limited and fettered by the reference to the prices which was contained in that clause, the difficulty might be got rid of by taking out the reference to prices and giving such abatement as if they were fixing the rents now for the first time. The other suggestion was this. It would be to leave the clause as it left the House, and to add a Proviso to the effect that the abatement to be given to the tenants under this clause should place them in a position similar to that of tenants in the same circumstances who might have had their rents fixed after 1885. That would put tenants who had their rents fixed before 1885 and tenants who had their rents fixed now, whether leaseholders or not, on the same footing. These were the alternative suggestions which he ventured to offer to Her Majesty's Government. He was bound to say for himself that he conceived there was a real difficulty which the House was called upon to deal with, and which he thought the intelligence and experience of the House ought to be able to deal with, even now at the last moment. He did not like the particular form of dealing with the difficulty proposed by the Government; and certainly if a Division were to be taken that the Lords' Amendment be inserted—which to his mind made so serious a difference in what he understood to be the principle of the clause, and which so considerably fettered the discretion of the Court—he, for one, should feel bound to disagree with the Amendment.

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.) said, he had made a careful study of this question of bankruptcy or no bankruptcy, and he had come to the conclusion that any scheme that could be proposed by the wit of man for dealing with all the debts of the tenants on an equal footing simultaneously and compulsorily would end in a bankruptcy scheme. When the Chief Secretary was appealed to on a former occasion regarding this question, he said that no proposal could be made for dealing with all the debts in the way suggested except one, and that would be a very expensive process. On that occasion he offered—although he and his hon. Friends believed it to be a vicious and unjustifiable principle to adopt—to consent to the treatment of all debts of the Irish tenants on an equal footing and at the same time, if the debtors chose to come into Court at the same time. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham in his speech now said no simultaneous treatment would be possible on such terms as that; but it would be perfectly easy, after notice had been given to the landlord that the tenant intended to come into Court, if the remaining creditors chose to intimate their intention of coming in, for the Court to postpone the case until all the creditors were represented. The reason why he drew that line between this arrangement and anything involving the principle of bankruptcy was because he felt that if they once passed that line they would be drawn, in spite of themselves, into a system of bankruptcy which would do infinitely more harm than good in Ireland. It would, in fact, lead to the eating up of all the little properties that remained to the tenants by lawyers and officers of the Court, and would leave the tenants bankrupts and paupers. The right hon. Gentleman in his speech endeavoured to throw the responsibility upon the Irish Members of the failure of dealing with the question of arrears in Ireland. It was not the first time that responsibility was thrown upon their shoulders in that House, and he could assure the right hon. Gentleman that it was not the first time that a Chief Secretary for Ireland and other English statesmen had undertaken to destroy their popularity in Ireland. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Chamberlain) had stated that he would come over to Ireland and state the magnitude of their crime and responsibility. With that wisdom which signally distinguished him, the right hon. Gentleman had selected Belfast as the place of his first appearance. If the right hon. Gentleman carried out his intention, and appeared in Belfast and certain other cities of Ulster, he undoubtedly would have large and enthusiastic audiences, and probably the chair would be taken by the Duke of Abercorn and some other great proprietors in those places. The audiences would be composed of the landlords and agents, and the Orangemen of Ulster, who now recognized in the right hon. Gentleman one of their most ardent and trusty champions. He would be very glad to see him coming over to address the Orangemen of Ulster, and the Irish Members would not be at all disconcerted by his appearance there. It was with the deepest regret that he noted Amendment after Amendment had been inserted in the Bill in the House of Lords, some of the utmost importance and some of the most petty and contemptible character, but every one, without exception, aimed at the interest of the tenant. On the great question of arrears no effort had been made in the House of Lords to deal with it, notwithstanding the professions of the Government. On Saturday last he took means to convey to the Government the information that even if they would draft roughly any clause dealing with the question it would be considered by the Irish Party in the most friendly spirit and with a desire, if possible, to arrive at some conclusion. But the Government, having that offer before them, were too busy drafting their 42 Amendments to destroy its benefits to give a single moment to deal with this great question, which would prove destructive to the measure as one likely to bring about peace and contentment in Ireland. The Irish Members were prepared to bear their responsibility and to go before the people of Ireland on this question, and they had not the slightest doubt in their minds of the acuteness and intelligence of their countrymen being quite sufficient to place the responsibility on the right shoulders. As the Bill left this House the wording on the whole was satisfactory; and what did the Bill as it left this House ask the Land Commissioners to do? It said—"Having regard to the difference in prices affecting agriculture, they were to determine what reduction ought equitably to be made on the judicial rent," &c. "Ought equitably to be made"—that had a meaning different from what was put upon it by the Chief Secretary for Ireland, or it had not. No matter how acute the ingenuity that might be applied to them, they could not take out of these words the meaning that the reduction was to be an arithmetical reduction calculated on the fall of prices. Having regard to the fall of prices the Commissioners were to exercise their own discretion, and to give to the tenant what reduction ought equitably to be made. That principle was absolutely and totally distinct from and irreconcilable with the principle introduced into the Bill by the Amendment in "another place." The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham brought forward three reasons why, in his opinion, it would not be just for a greater reduction of rent to be made than the exact amount of the fall of prices. He said it was admitted on all sides that the loss should not be borne by the landlord alone, but that it should be divided between the landlord and tenant. That was the principle on which the Irish Members always proceeded—they never claimed that the loss should be borne by the landlord alone. He did not admit that that was always a just principle when dealing with rack-rented tenants in Ireland, but still they had accepted the principle that the loss should be borne equally by the landlord and tenant. The right hon. Gentleman completely misstated or misunderstood the bearing of this case. Then the right hon. Gentleman accused him of having left out of sight the benefits which the tenant derived from the lowering of agricultural prices. The food on which the tenants lived had hardly altered in price during all those years. They lived largely on Indian meal and other cheap kinds of food; and the difference in the price of their food, therefore, scarcely entered as an element into the determination of the case with which that Bill dealt. The Chief Secretary for Ireland stated that, according to the principle of the Government, if a man gave so much oats in rent three years ago, he would still give the same quantity of oats. He asked the right hon. Gentleman to consider how that principle would work in relation to the wheat lands in this country to-day? Supposing a man three years ago gave as the rent of his land one-fourth of the wheat he grew, and was able to live and prosper on such a system, would he consider it just that he should give one-fourth of the wheat which he grew to-day? Did he not know that there were hundreds of thousands of acres out of cultivation in this country which they could not get men to cultivate, even if they gave it to them rent free? He was at a loss to understand how the Chief Secretary for Ireland could say that that Amendment of the Lords simply interpreted the original meaning of the clause. It was really a radical and revolutionary change of the principle of the clause; and to expect that the Irish Members should, at a moment's notice, consent to have that great change in one of the most vital parts of the measure debated and decided upon was most unreasonable. The Amendment in relation to town parks and other Amendments striking seriously at the interests of the tenants all sank into insignificance as compared with the present Amendment. He maintained that they had made out an overwhelming case for the adjournment of the debate, to allow them to consult opinion in Ireland, and to get back to the House Members who had left thinking that that great controversy, at least, was settled. A more extraordinary course had never been taken in regard to a Bill which the Government had declared to be urgent than the introduction of 42 Amendments at that time of the Session, almost all of them more or less taking away the benefits which the Bill conferred on the tenants. Considering the attitude which the Government took up in that House, considering the intense anxiety they had professed to get the Bill passed quickly in order to prevent eviction, and considering also that they were all-powerful in the House of Lords, surely noble Lords should have been prevented from moving those Amendments. He knew that noble Lords said they were not moved in the interests of the landlords; but that they were all meant for the benefit of the people, even including the Amendment striking out the 2,000 limit from the Town Parks Clause. The Government hurried the Bill through the House at the last Saturday Sitting; then they waited from Saturday till Thursday before bringing it again before the House of Lords, when they allowed 42 Amendments to be made, which would possibly postpone its passing for perhaps a week longer. Without wishing to say anything offensive to the Government, he regarded all their talk about the urgency of the measure as the merest imposture. What, however, was important to the Irish people was that the Bill, when it did pass, whether this week, next week, or three weeks hence, should be a real and substantial Bill, conferring benefits on the people commensurate with the labour expended upon it, and not a Bill which would prove to be a sham, a delusion, and a snare.

Mr. LEA (Londonderry, S.) maintained that the Bill was distinctly damaged in several points by the Amendments introduced in "another place." It seemed to him about the strangest and even the maddest thing which the friends of the Government in the other House could have done to introduce Amendments to weaken a Bill which had done credit to the Ministry. Benefits were held out to the tenants by the Bill, and then they were taken away again—a course of proceeding which tended to destroy the credit of the Government. If they could even now reject those Amendments, he begged them to do it. The House of Commons had fixed the limit for town parks to towns of 2,000 inhabitants; but the Lords had struck out those words and inserted an Amendment which would cause great consternation to the people of Ireland, and the people of Ulster particularly. It seemed to him absurd to say that the Government could not have prevented this if they had so chosen, and he would ask them now to maintain 2,000 as the limit of the Town Parks Clause. He believed that the 20th clause, as it applied to the Court valuers, was most repugnant to the Irish people. Would the Government reject that Amendment? That was the point on which the people of Ulster had a very strong feeling.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said, he intended to move the House to disagree to the Lords' Amendment on this point.

Mr. LEA said, that in that case he would not say another word on that point. If the Government would further meet them on the subject of town parks, he believed that two of the most objectionable Amendments of the House of Lords would be disposed of.

Mr. MOLLOY (King's Co., Birr) said, that when the Bill left that House Irish Members had hoped that it would be of some little benefit to the unfortunate tenants of Ireland, and that it would have enabled them to pass over the intermediate time before a larger and more efficient measure could be introduced. But, judging from the Amendments which had been introduced in the other House, it would seem that the Lords looked on the Bill as so injuring their interests that they felt justified in doing whatever they could to destroy its effect. By no other explanation could the extraordinary Amendments which had been introduced be accounted for. The First Lord of the Treasury had stated that the Bill as amended carried out all the intentions they ever had, and that the tenants would gain everything they had intended them to gain. How it was possible that the Bill, destroyed as they maintained it was, carried out all the intentions the Government ever had was an explanation he must leave to somebody on the Treasury Bench. The Lords had done everything they could to minimize the benefits which the Bill would confer on the tenants, and they had succeeded in doing so. He sincerely regretted the mangling of the Bill in the House of Lords. If the Bill were passed in its present shape he could not look forward to its having any remedial effect in Ireland. The only effect which it would have of any real and permanent character would be the facility with which it would permit evictions to be carried out.

Mr. JOHN MORLEY (Newcastle-on-Tyne) said, he did not rise to go into the details of the Amendments which had been made in "another place." The right hon. Member for West Birmingham before he sat down closed his remarks with the proposal of two alternative suggestions. Those suggestions, both or either of them, appeared to him to be worthy the most serious consideration of the Government and of the House. He had the less difficulty in assenting very cordially to the spirit of those suggestions because they amounted in effect to a recognition of the principle for which he and those who acted with him had been contending from the beginning of the Session. His right hon. Friend's proposals did include a general revision of rents, and that was the principle for which the right hon. Gentleman who moved the Amendment on the Bill (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) and he himself when he moved the Amendment to "Urgency," in the case of the Crimes Bill, endeavoured to press upon the House. The right hon. Member for West Birmingham now advocated the principle from which in the earlier stages of the proceedings on this Bill be emphatically and powerfully dissented. That being the case, and his right hon. Friend having made suggestions of that kind, they in that part of the House were not at all likely to dissent from weighing and considering them, and he ventured to hope that Her Majesty's Government would even now not resist the postponement of this discussion. He did not for a moment make any charge against the Chief Secretary on account of the discussion being brought on that night. The House would believe that the right hon. Gentleman did take all pains last night to ascertain whether it would be agreeable to the House generally that the Bill should be taken that night. But the debate having taken the turn it had, and suggestions having been made of great weight and importance, he thought the Government would be well advised if now, at the eleventh hour, they gave the House further time for the consideration of these proposals. There were one or two remarks which fell from his right hon. Friend (Mr. Chamberlain) as to which he should like to say a word or two. His right hon. Friend informed the House that he was going to Ireland to tell the Irish people that the responsibility for the refusal of great provisions of relief would rest upon hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway, because on Saturday evening last the hon. Member for East Mayo pointedly and emphatically rejected the proposals brought forward. The right hon. Gentleman should not forget that all that was necessary for him and his Friends to do was to support the Amendment of the hon. and learned Member for Inverness (Mr. Finlay). That Amendment aimed at permitting the composition of one kind of debt—namely, rent, and rent alone. Now, if his right hon. Friend and those who acted with him had adhered to what was in effect their own Amendment, there would have been no necessity for his right hon. Friend to start a new hare, as he did on Saturday afternoon, and there would be no cause for his now throwing blame on Members below the Gangway for resisting a principle to which they have never assented. The right hon. Member for Derby could not have assented to that proposal in the form in which it was made, because it involved the revival of the Bankruptcy Clauses under another name, and with some slight changes of procedure. Now, knowing how resolutely they on that side of the House had resisted in every shape the cumbrous, destructive, and ruinous proceedings in bankruptcy throughout these discussions, it was impossible that the right hon. Member for Derby should have assented for a moment to the introduction of a clause which would have been bankruptcy under another form. He only made these remarks on what fell from the right hon. Member for West Birmingham in order to make clear their position on this matter, and also to make clear the position of his right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham in not supporting the Amendment of the hon. and learned Member for Inverness. His right hon. Friend, and those with whom he acted, had only to have lifted their little finger in order to carry that Amendment. He did not want to go further into controversial matters; but he trusted what he had said on the matter of adjournment would receive the consideration of the Government. The suggestion which his right hon. Friend had now made embodied the principles for which they had been contending throughout the Session, and, as such, he thought they were well worthy of the consideration of the House and the Government; and, bearing in mind the importance of the issue at stake, he hoped that the Government would not for a merely nominal or apparent point of honour lose the chance of making this Bill an efficient and beneficial measure.

Mr. RATHBONE (Carnarvonshire, Arfon) said, that the clauses he first put on the Paper would have carried out what was proposed by the House of Lords' Amendment. The clauses he moved would have enabled the Land Commissioners to take into account any serious deficiency of crops in a given area; but the Chief Secretary said there was not time to argue out a scheme of that character. He therefore hoped the Government would now adhere to their original idea, and leave a wide discretion to the Commissioners.

The Marquess of HARTINGTON (Lancashire, Rossendale) said, he thought it was to be regretted very much if that evening were altogether lost for the purpose of consideration of the Lords' Amendments; and he should like to ask if the Government were inclined to consider the appeal made to them to postpone till Monday the consideration of the Lords' Amendments with regard to the revision of rents, whether the Members from Ireland would have any objection to go on with those other Amendments which did not bear on that question?

Mr. PARNELL said, he should he quite willing to go on with the Amendments until the first really important one was reached—namely, that relating to town parks.

Mr. W. H. SMITH said, the Government desired to act fairly with hon. Members below the Gangway, and to consider any Amendments which they might propose to the Lords' Amendments. They did not wish to take them by surprise, or act unfairly towards them. On a previous night every effort was made to arrange satisfactorily for to-night's proceedings. The Coal Mines Regulation Bill had been fixed for Monday, and, considering the importance of the interests it involved, he did not think he should be justified in further postponing it. It was, therefore, for the House to consider what course it should adopt; but he might say that if the Land Bill were postponed it would not be possible to take it up again until Thursday, and that was a delay which he deprecated in the strongest possible manner. He wished to prevent eviction in Ireland if he possibly could; and he believed that a postponement till Thursday would be attended with serious consequences to those tenants whom they wished to protect.

Mr. PARNELL said, that to save time he would say that they consented to the proposition of the right hon. Gentleman to adjourn the debate, either now or when they reached the Town Parks Amendment, on the understanding that it would be taken up on Thursday.

Mr. W. H. SMITH expressed the hope that if that were agreed to satisfactory progress would be made as far as that clause.

Mr. JOHN MORLEY said, he was of opinion that all the clauses might be dealt with except the Town Parks Clause.

Mr. COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin) said, it would involve a great loss of time if the House did not proceed with the Lords' Amendments to-night. He would suggest that the House should proceed with the consideration of the Amendments, and defer the consideration of the two Amendments relating to town parks and the revision of judicial rents.

Mr. W. H. SMITH said, he would agree to the suggestion, on the understanding that reasonable despatch would be made with the other Amendments during the present Sitting.

Lords Amendments to Commons Amendments and Consequential Amendments to the Bill, and Lords Reasons for disagreeing to certain of the Commons Amendments *considered.*

Consequential Amendment, to leave out in page 1, line 22 of the Bill ("Every lease limited to continue for any life or lives").

On the 1st Amendment, striking leases for lives out of the 1st clause,

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do agree with the Lords in the said Amendments."—(*Mr. A. J. Balfour.*)

Mr. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.) said, that he could not see on what principle leases for lives should be left on a different footing from other leases. He hoped the Government would refuse to agree with the Lords in this Amendment, which displayed the littleness of mind prevailing in the other Legislature.

MR. W. H. SMITH said, he felt bound to point out that the hon. Gentleman was not speaking in the spirit of the understanding which had been arrived at with regard to the progress of the Bill. It was hardly fair for the hon. Member to waste the time of the House with such observations.

MR. O'DOHERTY said, that he declined to give way. What he wished to draw attention to was the littleness of mind which the House of Lords had exhibited in dealing with this matter.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. GIBSON) (Liverpool, Walton) was of opinion that the Lords' Amendment made the clause clear, and that it ought to be accepted.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Amendments, as far as the Amendment in line 9 of Clause B, read a second time.

Several *agreed to.*

Several *disagreed to.*

Lords' Amendment, in line 3 of Clause B, to leave out the words "orally or in writing," read a second time.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR moved that the House do agree with the Lords in the Amendment. The Amendment struck out words which provided that a lease to which Section 1 would otherwise apply should be deemed to be within the said section if made, or agreed to be made, "orally or in writing."

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said Amendment."—(*Mr. A. J. Balfour.*)

MR. O'DOHERTY urged that the words "orally or in writing" should be retained, and remarked that when the matter was before the House the insertion of the words was proposed by the Attorney General for England after some discussion had taken place.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Next Amendment, to leave out, in line 9, the words "or otherwise," *disagreed to;* but an Amendment made to the words "or otherwise" so reinstated by adding the words "with the consent of the landlord."

MR. GIBSON moved that the House do agree to the Amendment made by the Lords in Clause C (sub-letting to labourers and others)—namely, to add at the end—

"This section shall not apply to sub-letting made by a tenant during a statutory term, nor to sub-letting made after the passing of this Act."

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said Amendment."—(*Mr. Gibson.*)

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.) said, he hoped that the House would not agree to the Lords' Amendment, as ample precaution had already been taken against sub-letting, and the Land Act of 1881 gave the Land Commission power to sanction sub-letting in certain cases.

MR. GIBSON said, that the object of the Amendment was to prevent the practice of sub-letting from increasing enormously. It was therefore proposed that the condonation which the Court could give to sub-letting should be limited to cases in which the sub-letting had taken place before the tenant came into Court to get a judicial rent. After the tenant had come into Court to get a judicial rent, he would not be allowed to sub-let.

Amendment proposed to the said Amendment, to leave out the words "to a sub-letting made by a tenant during a statutory term nor."—(*Mr. Dillon.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Amendment."

MR. DILLON said, he proposed to strike out of the Amendment the words "sub-letting made by a statutory term nor," so that the Amendment would then apply only to sub-letting made after the passing of the Act.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. GIBSON) (Liverpool, Walton) said, that he had heard no substantial reason for omitting the words.

MR. CHANCE remarked, that the Lords' Amendment as now proposed to be amended would sufficiently provide for the case of future sub-letting.

Question put.

The House *divided:*—Ayes 117; Noes 76: Majority 41.—(Div. List, No. 373.)

Original Question again proposed.

MR. DILLON said, he was opposed to the Lords' Amendment as a whole. If he had his own way in the matter, so far from any additional restriction being imposed, he would extend the operation of the clause. The clause, as it left this House, was, if anything, too narrow. He moved to disagree with the Lords' Amendment.

MR. SPEAKER said, it was not competent to the hon. Member to make that Motion, as a Motion that the House agree to the Lords' Amendment was already before the House.

MR. DILLON said, he would content himself with voting against the acceptance of the Lords' Amendment.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said Amendment."

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 113; Noes 71: Majority 42.—(Div. List, No. 374.)

Amendment, in page 3, line 3, to leave out the word "exact," the next Amendment, *disagreed to*.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR said, he moved to agree to the Lords' Amendment which provided that it should not be necessary to advertise the notice of ejectment in a newspaper circulated in the district in which the holding was situated. He would urge the House to accept the proposal, on the ground that if the provision were adhered to, and there was only one paper in a district, the landlord would be left practically at the mercy of the newspaper proprietor and might be charged a most exorbitant price.

Amendment, in page 3, line 8, to leave out "shall be published in a newspaper circulating in the district, and a copy," the next Amendment, read a second time.

Question proposed, "That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said Amendment.

MR. MOLLOY pointed out that when the House was in Committee, the Chief Secretary agreed that notice of the landlord's intention to dispossess a tenant through the post should be published in a newspaper circulating in the district.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR said, he thought it would be better to amend the Amendment by inserting the words "and a summary of such notice shall be posted on the police barracks or the court-house." He would propose to amend the Amendment in that way.

MR. DILLON said, he protested against the Lords' Amendment, which destroyed the only safeguard of the tenant for obtaining proper notice of the landlord's intention to dispossess him. The publication in the newspaper would be far more efficacious than the mere despatch of the notice of ejectment through the post and the placarding on the walls of the police station. He was perfectly willing that the wording should be so altered that the landlord could discharge his legal obligation by proving that he had delivered in the newspaper office a properly legally drawn notice, and paid the ordinary rate for its insertion, thus throwing the responsibility for its non-insertion upon the proprietor of the newspaper. No newspaper proprietor, he believed, would refuse to insert it.

MR. GIBSON said, there could be no doubt that the arrangement in the Bill would be effective. Serious difficulties had suggested themselves to their Lordships in "another place," and especially to the noble and learned Lord who knew as much about Ireland as anyone in this House, with regard to publication in a newspaper, and honestly and in the interests of justice he thought the suggestion of the Chief Secretary was not an unreasonable one, that the element of publicity would be sufficiently attained by the posting of the notices on the police barracks or court-house of the district. He might point out that the notice in the first instance would have to be personally served as an ordinary writ, and a copy of it sent to the tenant in a registered letter. If it were made compulsory to publish it in a newspaper the proprietor of a party newspaper might prevent compliance with the necessary formalities by declining to insert the notice, or levying black mail for its insertion.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne) said, that the hon. and learned Attorney General for Ireland had not met the point which had been raised by the hon. Member for East Mayo. To require that certain notices should be published in newspapers was nothing new to our law, and such notices were published in the case of Parliamentary elections. They could not secure sufficient publicity by posting these notices on the door of a police barrack, for in many districts in Ireland they would have to travel a great distance before they came to such an institution. He objected to depriving the unfortunate tenants of some slight protection which might still remain to them, and he considered it absolutely necessary that these notices should be published in the newspapers. He must deny that any real hardship would be entailed upon the landlords by requiring them to advertise such notices in the newspapers, and contended that even if any injustice to them was apprehended through the newspapers exacting an excessive price for advertisements of that description that injustice might be easily prevented by the adoption of such a provision as the hon. Member for East Mayo had suggested for limiting the charge to a sum which was reasonable and fair. It was the whole history of landlords in Ireland to confiscate tenants' property. And in Scotland——

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. Member is travelling beyond the Question before the House.

MR. CONYBEARE said, he would only add that he hoped the people would never rest until this odious provision was repealed.

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members being found present.

MR. WALLACE (Edinburgh, E.) said, according to the clause the eviction would have taken place before the notice could appear in the newspapers. When the personal service of the notice had taken place the eviction would be effected; and he could not, under the circumstances, see that any Amendment was necessary.

MR. EDWARD HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.) said, he must enter a protest against the alteration which had been made, and which was intended to do away with all the outward show of eviction. They held in Ireland that eviction scenes were a protection to the tenants. The tradesmen and the bankers of tenants were entitled to know the position of their customers, and they would be kept in ignorance if eviction could be carried out by the delivery of a registered letter. A tenant might be a ruined man and the shopkeepers know nothing about it. The Attorney General for Ireland had spoken of the probable extortion of Irish newspapers for these advertisements; but he (Mr. E. Harrington) thought the newspapers could bear favourable comparison with the Irish lawyers. The right hon. and learned Gentleman must surely know that there was a legal charge, beyond which the newspapers could not go. The Bill, when it left that House, was bad enough as a measure of relief for the Irish tenants; but since then it had been into the lions' den, and returned with the marks of the lions' "clause" upon it.

MR. M'CARTAN (Down, S.) said, he wished to remind the Government that the object with which this provision was put in the Bill was to prevent the perpetration of frauds and acts of the grossest injustice, and to prevent the landlords from entering into collusion with their tenants and so depriving creditors of money to which they were entitled. The only object for omitting this provision from the Bill was to enable creditors to be deprived of their rights.

MR. W. H. SMITH said, he would appeal to hon. Members from Ireland sitting below the Gangway opposite to allow some progress to be made. There was a distinct understanding that the proceedings that evening should not be prolonged, but that a rapid decision should be arrived at on the Amendments. He ventured to suggest that the course which had been pursued on the Amendment now before the House was not in accordance with the understanding to which he had referred. Hon. Gentlemen, no doubt, attached great importance to the question; but their arguments had been stated over and over again with great clearness, and nothing further was to be gained from a continuance of the debate except the postponement of other Business. The Government were anxious to meet the wishes of hon. Gentlemen in a fair spirit; but only one result would follow from the course now being pursued, and that was the obstruction of the Business of the House.

MR. CLANCY (Dublin, Co. N.) said, he did not think the statement of the right hon. Gentleman was at all warranted by the facts. The Irish Members attached great importance to this matter, and claimed the right to discuss it. He did not think that too much time had been occupied in debating the point. He might point out that seven Amendments had been considered in an hour and a-half, and the right hon. Gentleman might think himself very fortunate if other seven Amendments were agreed to in the same time. The rest of the evening had been spent in discussing the general question. If the discussion had been prolonged, it was simply because no attention whatever had been paid by the Government to the arguments advanced from the Irish Benches.

MR. HARRIS (Galway, E.) said, he objected to any secrecy in connection with evictions, and also to the way in which the Bill was being treated. The Bill contained some large and broad principles, but those principles were disfigured by the bad, mean, and pettifogging ways of the noble Lords in "another place."

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. Member cannot speak in such terms, without disregarding the courtesy due from one House to the other, and, moreover, his remarks are not pertinent to the Amendment before the House.

MR. P. J. POWER (Waterford, E.) said, it was absolutely necessary that these transactions should be made known to the public. The Irish Members did not insist upon having these notices inserted in any particular organ. The landlords could have the notices inserted in their own Tory organs if they liked.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 144; Noes 93: Majority 51.—(Div. List, No. 375.)

On the Motion of Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, insert words providing that—

> "A summary of such notice in the prescribed form should be posted by, or on behalf of, the landlord on a police barrack or court-house of the district in the prescribed manner, and within the prescribed time."

Consequential Amendment made to the Bill.

Amendment in page 3, line 41, next Amendment, *agreed to.*

Amendment, in page 3, to leave out lines 42 and 43, and in page 4, lines 1 to 3, the next Amendment *disagreed to;* but an Amendment made to words so reinstated, by inserting after "rent," in line 43, the words—

> "Of a holding where the rent does not exceed £100 by the year, or where the plaintiff elects to take advantage of, and proceed under this section."

Consideration of Lords Reason for disagreeing to the Amendment made by the Commons, in page 6, line 21, *postponed.*

Amendment, in page 6, line 32, to leave out "parcel of land," and insert "holding," the next Amendment, read a second time.

Further Consideration *postponed.*

Amendment to Clause D, the next Amendment, *agreed to.*

Amendments to Clause E, by leaving out, in line 6, "counties, poor law unions, or other," and by inserting, after "areas," "fixed by them for that purpose;" and by leaving out, in line 12, "counties, unions, or other;" and by leaving out, in line 14, "counties, unions, or;" and by inserting, after "respectively," in line 18—

> "So that the rent fixed under the provisions of this section shall differ by the difference in prices as aforesaid in the respective years;"

and by leaving out, in line 19, "counties, unions, or;" and by inserting after "Commission," in line 20,—

> "This section shall not apply to any rent fixed or revised upon appeal or re-hearing by the Land Commission subsequent to the first day of January one thousand eight hundred and eighty-six;"

and by leaving out, in lines 28 and 29, "counties, poor law unions, or other," and inserting "such;" and by adding, at the end of the Clause—

> "The powers and duties conferred and imposed by this section shall be exercised by the three Commissioners forming the Land Commission, and shall not be delegated to or exercised by any sub-commission or sub-commissioners, or any other body or person,"

—read a second time.

Further Consideration *postponed.*

Lords Reason for disagreeing to the Commons Amendment to leave out Clause 20, *considered*:—

Resolved, That this House doth insist on their Amendment to leave out Clause 20, to which the Lords have disagreed.

Subsequent Amendments *agreed to.* [Special Entry.]

Postponed Amendments and Lords Reason to be taken into Consideration upon *Thursday* next.

LABOURERS' ALLOTMENTS BILL.

(*Mr. Ritchie, Mr. Secretary Stanhope, Mr. W. Long.*)

[BILL 329.] COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."—(*Mr. Ritchie.*)

MR. H. GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden): Seeing that I have the honour of representing among my constituents a considerable number of agricultural labourers, I hope the House will excuse me if I trespass upon its indulgence for a very short time. In the first place, I would venture, in the name of my constituents, to congratulate the Government and the Conservative Party generally, on their conversion to the principle of compulsion and the substitution of the action of the State for the action of the individual, a principle which, it will be in the remembrance of the House, was bitterly denounced by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the last Parliament. If I may say so without presumption, and at the same time without any intention of recrimination, the bombardment of inconsistency between right hon. Gentlemen on both Front Benches, which we have been accustomed to during this Session as forming the whole of the artillery of right hon. Gentlemen on the other side of the House, has not affected the equanimity of thinking men in the constituencies. They might have been anxious sometimes about the consistency of right hon. Gentlemen on either Front Bench, but they have been much more anxious about the consistency of the measures before the House, affecting, as they do, their own interests. There is, however, one aspect of the inconsistency of right hon. Gentlemen opposite, which is important as regards the nature of the Bill, because if it be true, as it is asserted, that right hon. Gentlemen opposite are opposed in their hearts to the principle of compulsion in regard to these allotments, I can well understand the animus which has inspired the compulsory measure before the House, and why those compulsory clauses are so hedged in and fenced about as to be entirely useless for compulsory purposes. My experience induces me to say that what the agricultural labourer really wants may be summed up under four heads. In the first place, he wants a piece of good land—that is to say, a piece of land which it is possible for him to cultivate, and not a piece of land rejected by everybody else and then given to him. In the second place, and this is a very important point, the labourer wants a piece of land near his cottage, wherever he happens to live. In the third place—and this is a point which has been specially urged upon me by the agricultural labourers with whom I have been in converse—he has a strong desire that the piece of land should be given to him at a fair rent; and, in the fourth place, he wishes to be able to obtain that piece of land by an easy means of compulsion, and not by the very difficult and laborious method laid down for him in the measure now before the House. With regard to the first point, that of good land, I know that it has been stated, especially among my own constituents, that there are at the present moment any number of acres of uncultivated land lying open ready for sale. That was one of the great arguments used by hon. Gentlemen opposite in the Election of 1885 against those of us who argued in favour of small holdings. But I would remind the House that this uncultivated land, especially in the Eastern Counties and in arable districts, is very often mere heathland which was broken up during the existence of the Corn Laws, when the price of corn was high, and which now, under the depression in the price of corn, has become absolutely worthless. It is ridiculous to say that the agricultural labourer is to have land which has been rejected by everybody else. I now come to the much more important question put forward by the agricultural labourers—namely, the question of a fair rent. I would especially point out to the House, to borrow a form of expression usually attributed to hon. Members from Ireland, that an agricultural labourer, if he only pays the same rent as a farmer in the neighbourhood, is yet paying more than the farmer, because in the rent which the latter pays are included fencing and landlord's improvements, as well as a good dwelling-house, erected and kept up by the landlord. I come next to the question of compulsion. With regard to compulsion, the principle is a most important one as regards all classes connected with land. If properly carried out, and not as proposed by this Bill, the principle of compulsion will be a benefit to the landlord as well as to the labourer. I know that hon. Gentlemen opposite agree with me in this, that at the present moment even reasonable landlords who wish to give allotments often find great difficulties in their way because a field which is near the labourer's cottage, and which it is desired to give as allotments, is attached to the farm of one of the principal tenants, who, objecting to have the field taken away from him, claims such high compensation that it is impossible to make the allotments. Therefore if there is a good principle of compulsion, it will assist the good landlord who is anxious to meet the wishes of his agricultural labourers, and it will also enable the labourers themselves to get what they want from a bad landlord. But these four points are by no means satisfactorily met by the provisions of the Bill. At the same time I am aware that there is undoubtedly a great necessity that no chance of possible benefit should be missed of giving to the agricultural labourer some relief in his present impoverished condition, and if a Division is taken, I do not propose to register my vote against the Bill, but I would earnestly entreat the Government to try, either by accepting Amendments from this side of the House, or proposing Amendments themselves, to make it a real measure, and not a sham. At present, we have before us a few sheets of well intentioned but useless printed matter, with a very good title put upon them, ably calculated to tickle the ears of such agricultural labourers as have not read the Bill.

Mr. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby): The debate last night was so short and so hurried that I feel that, as representing a constituency which is largely agricultural, I need not apologize to the House for wishing to say a few words upon this Bill. I do not think that the English agricultural labourers and artizans will feel much complimented at the manner in which the Bill has been introduced by the Government. I remember that last year we spent many nights in discussing the Bill relating to the Crofters in Scotland. We all know what a great deal of time we have given up both this year and last to the interests of the Irish tenant farmers and labourers, and I wish therefore now on behalf of the English labourers and artizans to complain that the Government think so little of their welfare, that at the fag end of a long and arduous Session we are called upon to deal with a subject of this great importance without its being possible to give to it that consideration which it deserves. Sir, the Chancellor of the Exchequer complained last night that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) had imported personal matters into the debate; but I thought that his censure would have been better applied to my hon. Friend the Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham (Mr. Jesse Collings), whose speech was very little more than a virulent personal attack upon the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) and those who were his Colleagues in the last Liberal Government. I am aware that the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division has been going about the country and making speeches at ticket meetings—for he does not seem now to care about attending public meetings—in which he has accused the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian of having broken his pledges upon this question of allotments, and of having been guilty of the baseness of using the question merely to turn out the Tory Government last year, and then of abandoning it. The hon. Member for the Bordesley Division said last night that the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian and the right hon. Member for Derby took a great interest in allotments for the purpose of getting into Office; but that this interest ceased when that object had been attained, and that thenceforth they stopped helping forward the question. [Mr. Jesse Collings: Hear, hear!] My hon. Friend repeats that; but I will show the House that his attacks upon the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian are unjust, and that his charges against him are unfounded. What happened when the Tory Government were defeated in January, 1886? The Liberal Government came in with the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian at its head. Who were the Members of that Government whose duty it was to deal with the subject of allotments? Of course, the Heads of the Local Government Board. Who were they? My right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) was the President of the Local Government Board, and the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division was himself the Secretary to the Board. I challenge him now to say whether he can deny that he and the right hon. Member for West Birmingham were engaged, with the full concurrence of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian and his Cabinet, in framing a measure for local self-government, in which the allotments question was to be dealt with upon a popular basis?

Mr. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley): But it was never done.

Mr. COBB: That was your fault. I have the very best authority for what I say, and that authority is my hon. Friend himself. I remember that in February or March, 1886, I was one of a deputation which waited upon my hon. Friend at the Local Government Board, for the purpose of presenting him with an address from the Tysoe Allotments Association, one of the villages of which I have the honour to represent, thanking him—as indeed he deserved to be thanked—for what he had done for the good of the labourers. I was accompanied by the president of the Association, who presented the address. I remember that my hon. Friend received us with the courtesy and geniality which distinguish him, and he made us such a nice kindly speech, the last nice speech I think which I ever heard him make. That was before the Irish difficulty arose, and he told us how the Government of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian were determined to help the agricultural labourer, and that the right hon. Member for West Birmingham would bring in a Local Government Bill, which would deal with allotments in a complete and popular manner. Unhappily, my hon. Friend was shortly afterwards unseated upon Petition, and the right hon. Member for West Birmingham resigned his place in the Cabinet. The second reading of my hon. Friend's Allotments Bill was moved by my hon. Friend the Member for the Ilkeston Division of Derby (Sir Walter Foster), on March 31st, and on that occasion the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt), so far from ceasing to support the interests of the labourers, as is now alleged by the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division, made a vigorous speech in support of the Bill, in the course of which he used these words—

> "In my opinion, a measure of this importance ought to be in the hands of the Government, and its principle ought to be, and will be, dealt with in any measure of local self-government which may be introduced by Her Majesty's Government."—(3 *Hansard*, [304] 415.)

I remember thinking at the time how similar his words were to those which were used by the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division to the deputation at the Local Government Board. Upon the resignation of the right hon. Member for West Birmingham, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Halifax (Mr. Stansfeld) took his place in the Cabinet. He entered Office on April 7th, and on the following day, April 8th, the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian brought in the Irish Home Rule Bill. I ask hon. Members on both sides of the House whether it can be fairly contended that there was any opportunity whatever for the Government, from that time until they were defeated in June, to bring in a Local Government Bill? Therefore I say that I have shown that the charges of the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division against the late Liberal Government are absolutely groundless. My hon. Friend (Mr. Jesse Collings) seems to think that he is the only man who understands this question of allotments, and that no one else ought to presume to express an opinion; but I must remind him of what he seems to forget, that he has little opportunity of knowing at the present time what are the views of the classes who are principally interested in this question, the artizans in the towns, and the labourers in the villages; because since the Election of 1885, so far as I have been able to gather from the public Press, my hon. Friend has not mixed with those classes, but has spoken exclusively at ticket meetings. He said last night that the Leaders of our Party talked "blarney." What does he think of the Party opposite? I will give him the words of his right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Chamberlain) speaking at the General Meeting of the Allotments Association last year, said—

> "The Tories have lied upon this question with a vigour and a persistency and a unanimity which have almost elevated mendacity into the rank of a virtue."

The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) complained last night that the right hon. Member for Derby accused the Government of having brought in this Bill, not because they took any genuine interest in the question, but from electioneering motives, and because the exigencies of the Tory Party demanded it. I believe myself that that accusation is well founded, and that we should never have seen this Bill at all if it had not been for the Spalding Election. The names on the back of the Bill furnish conclusive evidence of this. It is natural and proper that we should find the names of the President and Secretary of the Local Government Board. They are the Ministers who have matters of this kind to deal with; but there is a third name on the Bill, and that is the name of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War. What in the world has war got to do with allotments? Agricultural labourers and artizans are opposed to war. They are men of peace, They are exactly the opposite of the jingo classes. Why then should the Secretary of State for War put his name on the back of the Bill? I will tell the House. The right hon. Gentleman is the Member for the Horncastle Division of Lincolnshire, and Horncastle is not very far from Spalding. Hence his desire to show his interest in allotments, and I am almost surprised that, when they were about it, the Government did not also put on the back of the Bill the name of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire (Mr. Chaplin). Now, Sir, I am not going to detain the House by discussing the details of the Bill to-night. I shall have opportunities of criticizing them when we get into Committee; but I will venture to say a few words as to the Local Authorities in whose hands the power of acquiring and the management of allotments ought to be placed, and I will trouble the House with short quotations from the speeches of two eminent politicians. The first is one which I am sure will commend itself to my hon. Friend the Member for the Bordesley Division. My right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham, in the same speech to which I have already alluded, said that one of the main principles was that the responsibility of dealing with this question should be thrown upon local representative popular authorities elected by all the ratepayers and voted for under the protection of the ballot. I heartily agree with this, but I find nothing of the kind in this Bill. The other quotation is one which will, I think, find favour with hon. Gentleman opposite. It is from the speech which Lord Salisbury made at Newport in the autumn of 1885—a speech which, like many others of his, has become historical. He was discussing local government, and he used what seemed to me a very happy expression in speaking of Local Authorities as governing—

> "Not necessarily in the most scientific or most accurate fashion, but in a fashion which is liked by the people over whom they rule."

That is all we ask for. But the two authorities to whom power is given by this Bill are neither of them liked by the people over whom they will have to rule. They are the Boards of Guardians and the County Magistrates. I hardly know which of these are the most disliked by the labourers and artizans, by the classes whom this Bill professes to benefit, but I should say the Guardians. In either case it is very much like putting the cat to take care of the milk, or the fox to guard the poultry yard. I believe myself that if there is one question more than another which it is essential should be dealt with locally and in small areas it is this question of allotments. How is this to be done? It is admitted, I believe, on all sides, that the existing authorities do not inspire confidence among the people, and therefore some other authority, of a more popular character, has to be looked for. The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board spoke last night in a very disparaging way of any parish authority; but I think he will find that there is a very general concurrence among those who have given attention to the question of local government, that in any comprehensive scheme, the parish must be the unit, and although the right hon. Gentleman seemed to ridicule the Parish Vestry, I believe myself that it is the best assembly in the parish for electing a body to deal with allotments and many other matters, such for instance as parish charities. I do not mean that the Vestry is satisfactory as it is at present constituted. There are many defects in its procedure, which is now uncertain and ill understood, and there is this great defect that the vestry has no continuous existence, and that at the close of one meeting it ceases to exist until another meeting is summoned. These defects want removing, so that the Vestry may be made a really popular assembly, with power to elect a representative parish authority, by ballot, and on the principle of one man one vote. I can tell hon. Gentlemen opposite, that among the labouring classes there exists a strong feeling in favour of parishes managing their own affairs. I have some experience as to this. I speak confidently, and I challenge Conservative Members to read that portion of the Press which represents the views of those classes whom this Bill professes to benefit, and to judge if I am not right. I have myself a Bill before the House upon this subject. It is set down upon the Order Paper to-night, and it has been down for second reading upon many other nights, but, except upon one occasion when they omitted by some mistake to do so, it has invariably been blocked by the Government Whips. [*Laugther.*] Yes, that shows whether there is any real wish on the part of the Government to treat this question in a popular way. It would be out of Order for me to discuss now the provisions of my Bill, and I am not going to do so, but I may perhaps say that my scheme is to place the power of acquiring, and of managing allotments, in the hands of Parish Committees, which would be corporate bodies, and would be elected freely by the ratepayers upon the popular principle of which I have spoken. The Bill of the Government makes a pretence of giving some sort of popular control by providing that local managers may be appointed, but by whom are they to be elected? Not by the people whose affairs they will have to manage, but by the Guardians, in whom the people have no confidence, and thus the only result of this sham provision would be that in every village there would be created another Tory and Primrose League tyranny. I should have voted for the second reading of this Bill last night, if a Division had been taken, because I think it very important, not only as regards this question, but looking to other questions which may rise in the future, to commit any Government, and especially a Conservative Government, to the two principles which are contained in the Bill—namely, the principle of giving any Local Authority at all the power of acquiring land for a public purpose like this; and, secondly, the conferring of compulsory powers on such Local Authority of acquiring land from private individuals. But, Sir, when I consider whether this measure will, if passed, have, or is intended to have, any practical or useful effect, I cannot help remembering —and I beg the special attention of my hon. Friend the Member for the Bordesley Division to this—the closing words of the impressive and eloquent speech which was made last year in this House by my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) upon the Amendment which proved fatal to the Tory Government. My right hon. Friend said—

> "We have no confidence that the Government will either do justice to the agricultural labourer or to any other question with which they may be called upon to deal."—(3 *Hansard*, [302] 517.)

Things have changed since then. [Mr. Jesse Collings: Hear, hear!] My hon. Friend cheers that remark, but it is not I who have changed. It is he and the select few with whom he acts. It would be affectation on my part if I were to pretend to believe that the right hon. Member for West Birmingham holds such opinions any longer, and especially when we find him praising *The Times* newspaper, which he formely so bitterly denounced, and pointing out the danger of tampering with judicial rents, although less than a year ago, he told us that there was no sanctity about them. But I hope that he does not expect us to change with him. I still hold the opinion which he so ably expressed in the words which I have quoted, and holding that opinion, and having carefully studied the Bill which we are now discussing, I believe that as it stands it would be absolutely useless, because it is not drawn upon popular lines. I am, I hope, in the habit of saying plainly what I mean, and therefore I will confess that, if I could have had my way, I should have preferred, at this stage of the Bill, to have met it by a Resolution, expressing the principles upon which this important question ought to be dealt with upon a popular and representative basis. Hon. Friends of mine, with whom I am in the habit of acting, and who are far more competent than I am to judge what is the best, think otherwise, and therefore I offer no opposition to the present Motion to go into Committee; but personally I should have been quite prepared to take the consequences of any action for opposing the Bill, and I know that my constituents have confidence in me and would have supported me in that action. I believe that to amend this measure satisfactorily it would be necessary to strike out almost every word of it, and in fact to redraw it; but we shall have to do the best we can. I have already given Notice of a number of Amendments and, when I can find time, I propose to draw some more. They will be *bonâ fide* Amendments with a view to improving the Bill. If in consequence of the number of necessary Amendments which will be proposed by hon. Members, it should be found impossible to pass any Bill this Session, the fault will not rest with them, but with the Government, who, influenced not by principle but by fear, are attempting in such a hurried way and at this late period of the Session, to deal with this difficult question in such a rough and ready way. I thank the House for the attention which it has given to me and apologize for having taken up so much of its time.

MR. LLEWELLYN (Somerset, N.): Hon. Members are acting oddly. They profess to welcome the Bill, and to approve the object of it. They then proceed to condemn it in every possible way, and to destroy it by their criticisms. It appears to me that when the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham (Mr. Jesse Collings), and the hon. Member for the Ilkeston Division of Derbyshire (Sir Walter Foster) spoke last night, the question of the size of the holding ran very much in their minds. The hon. Member for Bordesley has spoken a good deal, not only last night, but on other occasions, in reference to the supply of milk, and the advantages which agricultural labourers would derive from the possession of a cow. Undoubtedly, if that could be brought about, and a cow could be purchased at a reasonable price, no greater boon than a good supply of milk could be given to poor families. But I fear that there are difficulties in the way of the attainment of that object by the means suggested by the hon. Member for Bordesley. The hon. Member appeared to be in favour of small holdings, and of small allotments for agricultural labourers, with a view of enabling them to supply the public with milk. Now, there may be room, in some agricultural districts, for one or two men in a parish who are hard-working and industrious; but any man so situated who is able to carry on the business of selling milk and working it profitably to himself must be very fortunate. There is certainly no room for more than two or three in a population of 400 or 500. At any rate, it would be a most risky business, and an enterprise the success of which would be extremely doubtful, unless the man who undertook it was backed up by some other means of obtaining a livelihood than are at the command of an ordinary agricultural labourer. A poor man who undertakes to sell milk must work very hard and have luck. In a time of drought, such as we are now having, or in a time when cattle plague happens to be rife, the losses which the milk producer would suffer would be very likely to leave him in a worse position than that which he occupied before he took to the business. In my own neighbourhood I have tried to carry into effect an object somewhat similar to that which the hon. Member for Bordesley has suggested, although not precisely in the same way. I made a proposition to my neighbours to keep for them cows with my own herd—I may mention that I am a cheese farmer myself. I offered to any labourer to keep his cow at a very low rent; but in no case was I able to carry out the experiment with success; and the difficulties I experienced may, I think, be interesting to the House, or to those who have not tried a similar experiment, or thought much about it. Many said to me—"No doubt what you suggest would be a great boon; but will you milk the cow for me? Are you willing to take it into your own dairy, and let me buy the milk from you?" I said that that was not part of my scheme; whereupon they thanked me for my offer, but said they saw many objections to it, and the chief one of all was that the people had no time to milk the cows, had no place in which to keep the necessary utensils for making butter, and, lastly, that no member of the family could milk. Many hon. Members who have spoken on the subject evidently think that the art of milking a cow is the easiest possible thing. I can assure them that it is not so at all, and that many of the labourers in my neighbourhood would get far better employment if they were able to milk. A man must commence to milk when young, for it is impossible for him to take it up in his old age. Therefore, there are practical objections to this proposal. In regard to the small holdings, it is undoubtedly a fact that there are no better tenants than those who have small holdings. They are the best payers, their rents are generally ready when they are due, and, in my opinion, they do more good to the land than most of the big farmers; but still, there are objections which cannot be overcome. There is, in the first place, an objection to cutting up farms into holdings on leases and so forth. Then there is the practical objection that roads would have to be prepared to all these small holdings, and that buildings would have to be erected. In addition, if you are going to grant small holdings and not allotments you would be taking up the whole of the ground, and there would not be enough for everyone who applied for a holding. Whereas, with regard to allotments, every man who wants a quarter of an acre can, generally speaking, obtain it. There is another objection which I wish to point out to hon. Members who are in favour of small holdings, and that is, the objection of the Local Authority in regard to the renting and holding of the land. The hon. Gentleman the Member for the Rugby Division of Warwick (Mr. Cobb) said a great deal about the unpopularity of the Local Authority. Still, he must be aware that the Local Authority which will eventually have the granting of these holdings will be the County Authority that has not yet been formed.

MR. COBB: Under this Bill, the Local Authority for which the County Authority is to be substituted is not to have the management of these allotments.

MR. LLEWELLYN: I should hope that, whatever Local Authority is to be selected under the Bill should be the County Authority.

MR. COBB: It is expressly provided that the County Authority is not to have the management of the allotments.

MR. LLEWELLYN: I think the Local Authority should not undertake the letting of land unless they are absolutely guaranteed in some way in regard to the rent. There most surely will be a great number of bad debts, all of which must otherwise fall upon the rates. I do not say that those who take the allotments will wilfully decline to pay rents. Far from it; but in a great number of cases the allotments will be let to the most needy in the parish, and the rent will not be secured. If the Local Authority takes the land and sub-lets it, they must make up their mind to have a certain number of bad debts. If they go in for small holdings they will have to increase the number of pieces of land which they have to rent or to buy for that purpose; they must employ a legal gentleman and also surveyors and other officers which will entail additional expense. There is one point in reference to small holdings which I hope the House will seriously consider before it enters into the consideration of the provisions of the Bill at all, and that is the encouragement it will give to labourers who embark in what they are really unfit to undertake. I think they are far better off with regular employment and fair wages and an allotment than they would be with a piece of ground which would take them half of each week to cultivate, while during the rest of the week they would have no time to attend to it at all. I know that no one is more horrified at the idea of being in debt than the agricultural labourer. If the House therefore encourages him to embark in an undertaking which he cannot profitably carry out they will be inflicting on that class not a boon, but a positive injury. There is only one other point I wish to bring before the House, and it has reference to the Compulsory Clauses of this measure. I have never been able to make up my mind to approve of compulsory powers with regard to the purchase of land for this purpose. I believe, however, that they will be very rarely used. On that account, I am ready to record my vote in favour of the Bill. But if it is to be a question, in many cases, of the purchase of land for the requirements of a certain number of people in a parish, I think that many of those who now approve the principle of the measure may, before long, have cause for regret. I sincerely hope that the Bill will pass and become an Act of Parliament without delay this Session, and I believe that the benefits accruing from it to the people will not be merely so much money put into their pockets, but in other ways—in point of health, and the employment of their children, and in point of education for young agricultural labourers the benefits will be very great indeed.

MR. HALLEY STEWART (Lincolnshire, Spalding): I venture to claim the indulgence of the House in rising to address it for the first time. I know, from the experience of others, that that indulgence is never withheld from one who first ventures to enter the arena of debate in this House. In the first place, I desire to state on behalf of those whom I represent, how cordially I welcome this Bill of the Government. I am not here to throw at right hon. and hon. Gentlemen opposite any charge for having swerved from their purpose, or having altered their convictions, such Party questions may be better discussed inside this House by those who are more accustomed to its proceedings than I am, but out of doors one can freely express his opinions on the subject. In my judgment there are two reasons which have forced the Government, and which would have forced any Government, whether it were reluctant or not, to deal with this allotment question. The first is the severe depression in agriculture, which any man who has an eye to see with must perceive makes it difficult for farmers and for those in the occupation of their own lands, to pay even the low rate of wages which the agricultural labourer now receives. There is an idea that the land is cultivated simply for the purpose of making rent, and that that is the main purpose of the occupation of the land. I think that is an altogether erroneous point of view from which to approach the consideration of the subject. The land is cultivated for the benefit of the community. The labourer is the first charge on the land, he is bound to exist, and if he cannot exist in comfort on the land, we are bound to provide for him some means by which he can gain a livelihood by the occupation of a small patch of land. I see no reason why the labourer should not be able to supplement his wages to the extent of 50, 60, or 70 per cent by his skill and labour upon a small holding. I believe there is also another great cause which is operating in favour of the labourer besides agricultural depression, and that is the extension to him of the franchise and the consequent education he has received at the hands of the Press and of those who go into the agricultural districts to tell the labourers their views of the leading political questions of the day; so that now we have the double advantage of having men educated to know what their rights are and inspired with the desire to demand them and to use them rightly with such an intensity and spirit that no Party in this House can very long withhold what is believed to be a real, natural, and inherent right. In accepting this Bill—which I must cordially do—I hope I shall not be transgressing if I venture to criticize some of its leading provisions. But before doing so I trust that I may be allowed to put my finger on the one part of the Bill which gives all its value to me. I do not agree altogether with my hon. Friend the Member for the Rugby Division of Warwick (Mr. Cobb) in his references to the measures and the slight advantage it will be. Although in its provisions and immediate scope, there is not perhaps so much value in the Bill as I could have wished to see, yet, I believe it has in it a potentiality of wealth for the agricultural labourer which will bring him at least within easy reach of what he desires to obtain. The one point which gives it all its value is the word "compulsion," and notwithstanding the "soft impeachment" which has been directed against the measure by hon. Members on that account, I shall not shrink from avowing it as the one word I desired to see. I do not know that the word itself actually exists in the Bill, but its principle lies deep in the measure, and there can be no doubt as to its purport and intent. Although to get at that word we have to go through the arena of the Sanitary Authority, the Quarter Sessions, the Local Government Board, and even Parliament itself; yet there it is. That is really all we desire because we see in it the recognition that the labourer is no longer to be indebted to the generosity of the landlord for the right to live. You give him the fundamental right of existence, and the right to enjoy the reward of his labour if he will only cultivate the land properly. This is what makes the Bill so welcome to me. I venture to challenge the opinion of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) when he said that in his view and in that of his supporters the voluntary method is more desirable. Certainly, if there is no other Member who prefers the compulsory method, I am ready to express my preference for it. It is because I desire to see this compulsory principle extended further and further that I welcome its inception in the Bill before the House, and shall vote for the measure to-night. I should like to see many faults in the Bill completely blotted out. I should like to see the procedure simplified, and the quantity of land extended. I would like to see the number of authorities called upon to deal with this question minimized; but above all things there stands the compulsory principle which we have claimed as a right for the labourer. If this Bill is passed, we shall be able to go to our constituencies and tell the agricultural labourer that he is no longer dependent on the goodwill of any man; but that he has an inherent right to his piece of land if it can be shown that there is land which he can cultivate. I wish that the Bill were not so halting and hesitating. I do not see why it should be made necessary to show that there is a general public demand for land in any particular neighbourhood. Why should we wait until there is a great demand? If there are only 10 men in a village who want it; if there are only five; nay, if there is only one, why should he not have it? Why wait for a great public demand? If a man has a right to his piece of land, as I maintain he has, then the right is inherent in any single individual, and the object of the Legislature should be to simplify, if it can, the method of giving the land to this single individual without the necessity for the employment of useless and cumbrous machinery. I hope that before the Bill is passed many Amendments and improvements will be introduced into it in the direction I have indicated; and I believe that when passed it will be the commencement of a new era in agriculture. I trust the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board will not only allow allotments, but that he will be prepared to increase the size of the land allotted. I passed through some hundreds of allotments in the town of Nottingham only yesterday, and there I not only saw the allotted land, but the produce of it that would have done credit to highly skilled horticulturists. I believe that in Nottingham altogether there are 6,000 of these allotments, and I hope the right hon. Gentleman will not shrink from giving the freedom of erecting even a green-house or a vinery to the artizans of towns like Nottingham, where the existing allotments are made a considerable source of income. As I have said, this Bill when passed will be, I believe, the commencement of a new era in our agricultural life. It will give fresh hope to men who find subsistence a difficulty; it will help to get rid of the agricultural and commercial depression which now exists; it will lead to fresh demands being made upon the village shopkeeper, the city merchant, and the manufacturer; and in the end it will be found that Parliament has done more than is anticipated now for a return of prosperity to the country. I thank the House for the indulgence it has extended to me.

Captain COTTON (Cheshire, Wirral): I wish the House were accustomed to listen to many more speeches from the Opposition Benches in the tone and temper of the speech which we have just listened to. We should then be able to conduct our debates not only with more pleasure to ourselves, but with a good deal more profit to the country. I am disposed to think, with regard to the discussion which has taken place to-night, that, as Lady Teazle told Joseph Surface, it would be quite as well to leave out of consideration all questions as to consistency. It strikes me that there have been a good many more instances of inconsistency on the other side, and upon far larger and more serious matters, than many on this side can be charged with and blamed for in having changed our minds on the question of allotments. I frankly confess that during the Election of 1885 my mind steadily underwent a change, and that I became a convert to the system advocated by this Allotments Bill. In regard to dealing with English land, Cheshire stands high in the course the landlords have pursued towards the agricultural labourers. If other parts of the country were like Cheshire there would be no need for anything more than voluntary action, and there would be no necessity for the introduction of a Bill of this kind. I admit that in other counties there is a necessity for such a measure, and I venture to congratulate Her Majesty's Government on having brought it in. I am quite sure that hon. Members will not take it ill when I say that a great deal is owing in this matter to the exertions, for some years past, of the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham (Mr. Jesse Collings). I have no wish to detain the House with a second reading speech, but I would ask the Government to consider before we go into Committee whether, in view of some of the Amendments which have been put down, they cannot see their way to the extension in certain cases of the patch of land proposed to be given for allotments. Let me again refer to my own county of Cheshire. There we have an enormous number of these allotments, and in many cases they are of a sufficient size to enable the labourer to maintain a cow, and it is felt to be one of the greatest privileges a labourer can possess. On the estate of Lord Tollemache, which is well known for the privileges which the agricultural labourer possesses, in many instances he has a sufficient acreage to permit of his keeping a cow. Having quoted what Lord Tollemache does in respect of his property, perhaps I may be allowed to quote a case of my own. My own estate is a very small one, but nearly 60 per cent of the holdings on that estate are under three acres. I do not mean that the majority have enough land to enable them to keep a cow, but a very considerable minority have, and I am quite certain that no man, looking at the question from a rent receiver's point of view, need have any fear as to the return which a holding of three acres will provide him with. I am glad that everyone in the House—even the malcontents on the other side who profess to treat the Bill as a sham—thoroughly welcomes it, and I trust that the Government will use every effort to pass it, and to make it law during the present Session.

Mr. JARVIS (Lynn Regis): As I have strong feelings for the welfare of the agricultural labourers, especially in the Eastern Counties, I hope the House will allow me to say a few words upon the Bill. I am glad to find that the measure has met with hearty approval from Members on both sides of the House, although, in some cases, that approval has been rather tardily given. It is a measure in regard to which both political Parties may be said to have been pledged in the past. The only difference between the two Parties is this—that whereas the Liberal Government, which came into Office on the Motion of the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham (Mr. Jesse Collings) last year, failed to proceed with any legislation on the subject, it has now been left to the Conservative Government to bring in a measure which, I am sure, meets the approval of the agricultural labourers generally. I cannot help being reminded of the fact that had it not been for the action of some hon. Members on the other side of the House—and especially of one who is no longer a Member of this House—the Bill introduced by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire (Mr. Chaplin) would, in all probability, have passed into law last year. Mr. Arch no longer represents the North-West Division of Norfolk; but it was in consequence chiefly of the opposition of Mr. Arch that the right hon. Gentleman's measure was not passed into law. And his opposition to the Bill was, if I remember rightly, that it was an "insult to his class," and the insult to his class was, if I also remember rightly, contained in a clause copied verbatim from the Bill of the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham, which Bill had upon the back of it the name of Mr. Arch himself. Well, Sir, the agricultural labourer of Norfolk was not unmindful of that fact; and when the General Election came the consequence was that Mr. Arch lost his seat, and my noble Friend who now sits for the North-Western Division of the county (Lord Henry Bentinck) reigns in his stead. Now, I think—and here I must disagree with the hon. Member for the Spalding Division of Lincolnshire (Mr. Halley Stewart), who has just spoken—that the demand for allotments should be met, if possible, in a voluntary manner. I think it has been proved by the figures submitted to Parliament by the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board, that a great proportion of the landlords of England and Wales are of the same opinion as myself. The figures submitted to Parliament show that of the number of labourers who were estimated at the last Census, nearly one-half are already provided voluntarily with allotments; but in the Eastern Counties—those which are essentially agricultural, comprising Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridge, Lincoln, and Huntingdon—only two-fifths of the labourers are provided for. It is, therefore, certain that the labourers of the Eastern Counties will hail with satisfaction the proposals of Her Majesty's Government. I am quite satisfied that the passing of this measure will greatly stimulate the voluntary effort. It will give the Local Authority the power of compelling the landlords to provide allotments if they refuse to comply with the demand for them. I am not aware that any such case has already happened, but I am satisfied that the mere passing of this measure into law will necessarily make the landlords of England and Wales grant these allotments without there being any necessity to have recourse to the compulsory powers of the Bill. I notice that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), in a speech which he made on the 29th of last month, tried to throw cold water on the scheme by insinuating that the County Magistrates are the last people in the world to whom the agricultural labourers can look for support in the matter. With all respect, I entirely differ from the right hon. Gentleman. I think that the County Magistrates, both as private individuals and also when assembled in Quarter Sessions, have always shown that they are ready and willing to promote the interests of the agricultural labourers, as well as those of all other classes of Her Majesty's subjects; and I think that, should any case be brought before them as the County Authority under the Bill which the Local Authority are not able to deal with, it will be found that the matter will be dealt with in that same able and business-like manner in which all other business of the County Magistrates is transacted. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) has adopted his old cry of "the classes and the masses," but I would tell the right hon. Gentleman that in the Eastern Counties, at any rate, the classes and the masses have arrived at the knowledge of the fact that what is for the benefit of the one is equally for the benefit of the other. I think that any attempt to stir up class jealousy in the Eastern Counties will meet with the contempt which it deserves. With regard to the size of allotments, I think that the Government have exercised a very wise discretion in limiting it to one acre, for it cannot be too strongly impressed upon the agricultural labourers that an allotment should be supplementary to, and not a substitute for, their weekly wages. I think it would be wise on their part if the application were for one or two roods rather than for the full limit under the Act. I have had a certain experience of this allotment question myself, and I have always found that when the matter has been put clearly, fairly, and straightforwardly before the agricultural labourers, free from any agitation, and apart from any political feeling—when, in fact, they have been asked to think out the question for themselves — they have come to the conclusion that one or two roods were as much as they could work at a profit, in addition to giving satisfaction to their employers. I think that the great point in regard to the rent of allotments is that the Local Authorities should take care that it should only be the agricultural rent of the particular district in which the allotment is situated. It seems to me a good arrangement that all the outgoings should be included in the rent—such, for instance, as tithes, rates, and taxes—rather than that they should be collected in small sums from each individual occupier. I do not wish to detain the House any further on these matters. I am much obliged to the House for having listened to the few remarks that I thought it my duty to make, and I only hope that the Bill will quickly pass into law this Session, because I am perfectly certain that it will prove a great benefit to all the agricultural labourers in England,

and especially those in whom I am chiefly interested—that is to say, the labourers in the Eastern Counties.

Mr. HANDEL COSSHAM (Bristol, E.): I am delighted to find that, notwithstanding difference of opinion as to some of the details of the Bill, we are agreed in all parts of the House as to the importance of the subject we have to deal with. I confess that I think it is a most important matter for the agricultural labourer himself. We are all agreed that the condition of our agricultural labourers in England has been one of the great blots in our social and political life. I forget who it was who once said that "an agricultural labourer's life was on an inclined plane, with the workhouse at the bottom." Whether we hold that extreme view or not, I am certain that we are all agreed that everything we can do to raise the condition of this important section of the community will be to the benefit of the nation to which we belong, and to all parties in this House. Not merely from the point of view of the agricultural labourer, but from the point of view of the nation itself, I think there is no more important problem to solve than how to get more out of the soil on which we live than we do at present. I hold the belief very strongly that the soil of the country is not producing anything like the amount of food for the people which it should be made to produce, and I hail this Bill because I think it will help to produce much better results from the soil than have been produced hitherto. I think it will add to the national wealth by enabling better provision to be made for the national wants. So long as we buy more than half our food from abroad there is this great problem to deal with, and I hold that those who are helping to bring more produce from the soil are helping to render this country greater than it has been in the past. While I am grateful to those who bring us sustenance from abroad, I shall be still more grateful to those who help us more and more to grow what we require at home. I certainly think that this Bill giving small allotments to men able and willing to cultivate them will help to solve that problem. An important point to me is that the Bill, though in a somewhat halting manner, recognizes the right which the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Spalding Division of Lincolnshire (Mr. Halley Stewart) referred to with great skill and power just now—the principle that everyone who is born into this world has a right to live. I remember that when that statement was once made by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) it was very much ridiculed; but you may depend on it that the longer we live the more we shall have to recognize that principle. When mouths are sent into the world they are intended to be fed, and whatever obstacles there may be in the way, the present and future generations will have to help to remove them. I am not one of those who wish to join in the rebukes of either one side of the House or the other as to the position in which we stand, and the inconsistency of individuals. I think the less said about inconsistency the better; and I do not say that in any bantering spirit. I believe the opinion of the nation is firm on this subject, however our public men may bandy accusations of inconsistency from one side to the other. That hon. Gentlemen on the other side of the House did not see their way to entering upon a principle the necessity for which was so evident to us the Division List on the Motion of the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham (Mr. Jesse Collings) will show. There were very few on the other side of the way who supported that Motion, and that shows that many hon. Gentlemen on that side did not hold the opinions they do now. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] Then, at any rate, they did not vote as they are going to vote now. I will not taunt them with having changed their opinions, because I am pleased with what they have done. I think the thing we are aiming at now is so important that we may well forget these matters, and all join together in an attempt to give effect to the great principle we have in view. One of the great defects of our social and economic system has been to unduly divorce the people from the soil. The more that defect can be eradicated and the more people can be joined to the soil, the more stable will be our future. I hear with great regret that there are large tracts of land in the country which are going out of cultivation. That is a state of things that we ought never to permit. With a limited area such as ours, and a large and increasing population, it is essential to us that the most should be made out of the land in the way of cultivation. I go across land every week within a few miles of London, which is not producing £10 in produce per acre in the year. And yet here are 10,000,000 mouths to be fed. I say it is a disgrace not to utilize the soil for that purpose. We are too much dependent on the foreigner for our food, and we should make greater efforts to grow wheat we require for our sustenance at home. I notice with very great regret the decimation of our village life. I look upon it as one of the darkest features of our present position that our village life is dying out. I want our village life to be revived, and I think that in this Bill we have the means by which that can be done. There are features in our village life we ought not to let die out, and I venture to hope that we shall all continue to give effect, so far as we can, to the resuscitation of that village life, and to help to build up what has been one of the great elements of our strength in the past—the village life of our country. If I were asked to suggest what is the real cause of this Bill, I should say I think the hon. Gentleman who spoke just now hit the right nail on the head. However much some hon. Members may desire to conceal it, the fact still remains that the cause of this Bill is the extension of the franchise. The agricultural labourer has a vote, and because he has a vote we find out that he has wants. I trace back, therefore, to the extension of the franchise the great blessing which I believe will grow out of giving to the labouring portion of our agricultural population the right to occupy and to cultivate a portion of the soil for their own advantage and the advantage of the State. When I come to speak of the Bill itself, I cannot express the same approval of its details as I do of its principle. There are some of the details which not only should be amended, but which are of such a character that unless they are amended the value of the measure will be destroyed. I cannot approve of the principle of having the Bill set in motion by Boards of Guardians. The idea of administration by the Boards of Guardians leads up to the idea of pauperism. Nothing so weakens a nation as the fact, or even the idea, that they have to depend on somebody else more than themselves for the supply of their necessities. Anything which will tend to pauperize the people, or tend to give them the idea that they are being pauperized, will tend to decrease the national strength. Well, the idea of requiring the agricultural labourer to go to the Board of Guardians for the purpose of getting land seems to me to be absurd. And as to appealing to the Quarter Sessions, that is worse still; you might as well consult the cat as to how the mice are to be sustained as to expect the Quarter Sessions to regard with anything like generosity the principle on which this Bill is to be carried out. If you wish to make the Bill effective, then create a machinery for carrying it out in which the people can have confidence. They have no confidence in the Boards of Guardians nor in the Quarter Sessions, and they have good reasons for not having it. If you want to make it effectual, you must take care that the rents charged for the allotments are not too high. If you allow anyone to charge a higher rent than the farmers pay in the neighbourhood of the allotments, you are doing what is unjust, and what will destroy the object of the Bill. I believe, moreover, that you should not confine the Bill to one acre, but that you should provide that an agricultural labourer may have even three acres if he can till it, and a cow into the bargain if he can get it. I believe that if this Bill passes the Session will not have been thrown away. I have often gone home from this House with a heavy heart, feeling that to bring 670 men together simply to discuss coercion does not tend to our national greatness; therefore it is that I should like to close the Session with a Bill which will bring comfort, happiness, and prosperity to many a home which is now disgraced by poverty—[*Laughter*]—I should not have referred, but for that laugh, to one remark made by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire (Mr. Chaplin). Sitting here last year, and hearing him speak on the proposal of the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham, I remember his saying with that power which he can put into his arguments, and with that weight he can give by his appearance to his arguments, "The voice is the voice of Jesse, but the hand is the hand of Joseph." I am glad that the voice and the hand, whoever owns them, have got hold of the present Government, and are holding them with a grip which I hope will bring them through this piece of legislation which I feel sure will tend to the happiness of the country. I think that future generations will have to thank this House and this Government for having given them a right too long withheld — the right of bringing people directly and personally into contact with the soil of the country.

VISCOUNT GRIMSTON (Herts, St. Alban's): I congratulate the hon. Gentleman the Member for East Bristol (Mr. Handel Cossham) on having discovered a gold mine, and if he will kindly state what is the method by which, with wheat at 34*s.* a-quarter, £10 an acre per annum can be extracted out of the land, I am sure he will be doing the whole community an inestimable benefit. I have noticed that the speeches made by right hon. and hon. Gentlemen on the other side of the House have betrayed a certain feeling of disappointment, and I am not astonished at it, for when the golden opportunity has been passed by, it is not unusual for those who have seen it pass to feel some soreness at seeing others take advantage of it when it presents itself to them. I hope the Government will strive to carry this Bill through. I am perfectly sure that if they do they will not only receive the support of this House and the country, but that they will be doing a great benefit to agriculture and to the labourers of England. There are one or two points in the details of the Bill that I wish to call attention to. I shall detain the House for a very short time; but I do hope the Government will be able to see their way to making some modifications in the Bill in the directions I will point out. One point is that brought forward by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire (Mr. Chaplin) with regard to notice being given to landowners. I trust that the Government will see their way to introduce some clause or provision in the measure requiring notice to be given to landowners who, perhaps, may not know of the desire that exists for the possession of land, in order that they may not have the principle of compulsion applied against them. Then there was a question referred to a short time ago by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Bethnal Green. He was speaking of the rates charged by landlords for land let to labourers, when land could be got by farmers in the same neighbourhood at a much lower rate. He did me the honour to quote the name of my father in speaking as he did of Lord Onslow's charge for allotments. He quoted my father as charging a higher rate for land let as allotments than he charged to farmers in the same locality. The hon. Member did not, perhaps, know that, though technically the land is let at a higher rate, yet that the land is worth £300 an acre, and that my father pays the tithes and rates and taxes. If he had known this, he might not have been surprised at the rent being a little bit higher than that charged for purely agricultural land. I think that this is generally the case with regard to all such land. Land of this character is often accommodation land in the near neighbourhood of towns, and the landlords are compelled to charge slightly higher rates in order to cover the expenses of the property. There is one point in Clause C that, I think, might possibly be altered. I see there that not more than a quarter's rent shall be required to be paid in advance. That will require a great deal of collection, which will have to be done once a quarter, and perhaps more frequently, which is a matter that, I think, will cause great expense. I do not object to it as a principle; but I think no hard-and-fast rule should be laid down, as it may probably cause harm to the labourer instead of good. I also think the Government would do well to consider favourably the suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire, and provide that tenants of allotments should have permission to erect toolhouses and pigstyes. I will not consume the time of the House by commenting at any length upon these points, which, however, are very important ones. I will conclude by saying that I feel the labourers of England, and the landowners themselves—who are shrewd enough to understand that the measure will not hurt them—will believe that the Bill is for the benefit of the country, and will do good to those who wish to obtain honest employment, without doing harm either to landlord, farmer, or labourer.

Sir JOHN SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield): Looking through this Bill, I must say it puts me very much in mind of the Agricultural Holdings Bill brought in by Lord Beaconsfield when Head of the Government. It was a very good Bill in name; but hon. Gentlemen will remember that, like the scorpion, it carried a sting in its tail, for the last clause provided that landed proprietors could contract themselves out of it. I did so myself, following the example of Her Majesty's Department of Woods and Forests. This Bill is so framed that if anyone were to try to work it out in a practical manner, it would be found to show the way how not to do it. We have to apply to the *ex officio* Guardians; in case of appeal we have to apply to the same persons who are magistrates at Quarter Sessions. Then we have several hon. Members opposite saying that one acre is far too much, or, at all events, one hon. Member said it was quite sufficient. The whole principle of the Bill, as I understand it, is not to take land on which an agricultural labourer is to do spade work, but it is to enable them to keep a cow, so that they and their families may have daily milk. In the North of England every agricultural labourer has a cow, or else he shares the milk of his neighbour's cow; but I was astonished to find in the Midland Districts, on going through the country, that there was a total absence of milk in the food of the labouring people. It is well known how injurious it is to bring up children without milk; and yet we are told that one acre is too much, and in the opinion of some hon. Members that it is quite enough. Now I beg leave to point out to the House that it is not sufficient. I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) ever kept a cow, but if he did he would know that at least six acres of land, unless it is very good land, is necessary for the purpose. Grass does not grow all the year round; it is only a six months' growth, and part of the land must be set aside to provide hay for the winter; and we know, besides, that it is a standing covenant in leases that the farmers are not allowed to sell hay, and that they are obliged to consume it upon the farm they rent. The practical result of limiting the land to one acre will be to render it impossible to work out the object in view. I venture to suggest to the House that, instead of the County Authorities with the complicated machinery connected with them, the County Court Judge, assisted by a practical assessor, should value the land and say what is a fair rent and a fair value for it. Most people have considerable confidence in the County Court Judges; they are open to criticism in the Press, their Courts are open; and they will, as it is well known, weigh the circumstances brought before them in an impartial manner, because their appointments do not rest upon fear or favour, and they hold them, as a rule, for a long period. I hope we may get this Bill, so to speak, disembowelled, and that the Government will see their way to accept the Amendments put down on the Paper, so that this Bill may effect a practical reform and make it really a boon to the agricultural classes throughout England.

The PRESIDENT of the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. Ritchie) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I am glad that the Government have been enabled to arrange that the discussion on this Bill, which commenced last night, should be continued this evening. We have no reason to complain of the tone which the discussion has taken. A great many valuable observations have been made, which will undoubtedly receive, as they deserve, the consideration of the Government. I can assure the House that we welcome any assistance which, while adhering to the principle of the Bill, will carry out more effectually the object in view—that is, the obtaining of allotments by agricultural or other labourers throughout the land who may stand in need of them. It will not be necessary for me to detain the House for more than a few minutes, as most of the points which have been alluded to to-night have been already dealt with in the course of the discussion which took place yesterday. But there are one or two points on which I desire to say a few words. We have had to-night two speeches, one from the hon. Member for the Rugby Division of Warwick (Mr. Cobb), and the other from the hon. Member for the Spalding Division of Lincolnshire (Mr. Halley Stewart), to which I wish to refer. With regard to the speech of the hon. Member for the Spalding Division of Lincolnshire, I hope he will allow me to congratulate him upon it, and upon the arguments which he has used with reference to this Bill; and although I would very much prefer the hon. Member to sit in another quarter of the House, yet I hope that the fact of his sitting opposite will not prevent my doing justice to the extremely moderate manner in which the hon. Gentleman has dealt with the Bill before us. The hon. Member, unlike the hon. Member for Rugby, on whose speech I shall have to make a few remarks presently, confined the whole of his speech to the Bill, and, while acknowledging that there were certain points in it which he desired to see amended, he was not prevented from giving credit to the Government for what he evidently believes to be an honest effort on our part to provide allotments which we think necessary and desirable for the labouring classes. The hon. Gentleman gave as one of the reasons for the Government dealing with this question the agricultural depression which exists at the present time. No doubt, that is a matter which must in a country like this always be one of anxious consideration for every Government. Never more than at the present time was the question of agriculture deserving of greater attention, and if the proposal we make in the Bill is the means of giving a larger amount of employment to and attaching more closely to the soil the agricultural labourers, at the same time keeping them in the country rather than as at present going in such numbers into our towns, we believe that it will be highly a useful and valuable measure. The hon. Gentleman spoke about the machinery of the Bill; and he asked why is it necessary to proceed through the Sanitary Authority, Quarter Sessions, and Local Government Board? He spoke also specially with reference to the Board of Guardians, saying that it was in some measure degrading to apply to the body having the administration of the Poor Law for the purpose of obtaining allotments. I do not say that the Board of Guardians are my *beau-ideal* of the authority which ought to deal with this question. All that I have contended for is that having regard to the circumstances of the case, and after looking for other authorities who might possibly be availed of, I am of opinion that they are the best means to our hands in the rural parts of the country. I admit that if we were able to set up some machinery for the purpose of carrying out this Bill, we should considerably alter the means of which we avail ourselves at the present time, and we have never disguised our belief that if we could along with this measure have introduced our Local Government Bill, by which we hoped to make considerable amendment in the matter of allotments throughout the country, it would have been much better and more desirable. But we were very unwilling that this present Bill should be delayed until we had time to deal with the larger question; and, therefore, we thought it better to avail ourselves in the manner we have of this machinery, hoping in due time to set up authorities to which the House and the country will take no exception whatever. With reference to the Boards of Guardians I will point out that, although it happens that the Boards of Guardians would act in this matter, it is not in the capacity of Guardians of the Poor that they are employed in connection with the present Bill; it is as Rural Sanitary Authorities only; and in charging the Rural Sanitary Authorities with this duty at present, we are not at all attaching the stigma which it is said will result from application to the Guardians; for if there be one thing which I maintain to be more necessary than another, it is to separate the action of the Bill from anything which would make it appear that the rates were to be brought in aid of this measure. I am sure that if these allotments are to be a success they must be self-supported and not dependent on the rates, and there is no evidence before me to show that there will be the smallest difficulty in providing at a reasonable rent allotments for all those who are desirous of having them, without the rates being chargeable in any way whatever. Therefore, I hope hon. Members will displace from their minds the idea that the Poor Law Guardians as a body are charged with the administration of the Bill. The hon. Gentleman asks if we would substitute the Local Board for the Quarter Sessions. The Quarter Sessions have been alluded to more than once to-night. I pointed out last evening that it was desirable, in view of setting up the future County Authority, to take the County Authority which already exists—namely, the Quarter Sessions; but to that we attach no importance whatever, and I assure the House that we are prepared to substitute for the Quarter Sessions the Local Government Board. With regard to the observation that the machinery of the Bill is complicated, I may point out that whether it be complicated or not this machinery is only put in force when land is to be purchased compulsorily. But I believe the land will be purchased without compulsion at all. I believe that the existence of the power in the Bill will itself prevent that power being used, and therefore I am of opinion that in 99 cases out of a 100 this machinery, whether complicated or not, will be unnecessary; and, further, looking to the fact that when land is acquired voluntarily no other authority is invoked except the Sanitary Authority, hon. Members will see that it may be anticipated that the machinery to which exception has been taken may not be necessary at all, and that the whole matter will be in the hands of the Sanitary Authority, both in rural and urban districts. But supposing that compulsion were necessary and the complicated machinery referred to, it has not been found in connection with other matters in which land is compulsorily acquired that any difficulty is experienced. As I told the House last night, out of 110 appeals presented to Parliament during the last five years by the Local Government Board 108 have been unopposed; there has been no opposition, no expense, and no trouble whatever. But where compulsion is necessary it will not be that compulsion will be brought into play for the purpose of each particular allotment, as some hon. Members seem to suppose. The hon. Gentleman has asked whether all this machinery will be set in motion. Certainly not. The Local Authorities, if they have reason to believe that there is a demand for allotments in their neighbourhood, will apply for and obtain at one operation the whole of the land which may be necessary to supply the demand, so that I believe, whether you look upon this as a voluntary question or whether you regard it in connection with cases where compulsory powers are necessary, the machinery will be found to be simple, effective, and speedy in its operation. I have now to say a word or two on the speech of the hon. Member for the Rugby Division of Warwick (Mr. Cobb). The hon. Member has undoubtedly for a considerable time taken a very great amount of interest in this question of allotments, and I am bound to say that I was somewhat disappointed at the tone which the hon. Member adopted towards the Bill. It is quite true he told us he would not vote against the Bill.

MR. COBB: I said that I should vote for it.

MR. RITCHIE: The hon. Member said he would vote for the Bill; but in the same breath he clearly showed that although he would not like to place himself in the position of voting against the Bill or abstaining from voting, he would exercise the whole of his ingenuity in preparing such volumes of Amendments as would practically destroy it.

MR. COBB: I said that I would try to make the Bill what I thought it ought to be, by putting down Amendments for that purpose.

MR. RITCHIE: I do not think that is quite what the hon. Member said. I have here that he had put down many Amendments, and that he intended to put down many more when he got time. I am not sure that the hon. Member did not go the length of saying that he hoped the Bill would not pass.

MR. COBB: I did not use those words. I said that, considering, as I do, that the Bill as it stood was not one which would do any good, although I should not vote against the second reading, I should put down Amendments setting forth the principles on which I thought the Bill ought to proceed.

MR. RITCHIE: I am quite aware that the hon. Member said that; and he also said what I have on my note. To my mind the whole tone of the hon. Member's speech went to show that he was thinking much less of the good which the labourers were to derive from the Bill than of the means by which he could throw discredit on the measure. At any rate, the hon. Gentleman cannot deny that, although he said that the labourers had not been paid any compliment by the Government giving so short a time for the discussion of matters in which they were interested, he devoted certainly three-fourths of his speech to matters altogether outside the Bill. He devoted three-fourths of the time during which he addressed the House to recrimination and taunts addressed to hon. Gentlemen on his own side and others for the action they have thought it necessary to take. I should have thought if he had been so extremely anxious to save the time of the House, and so anxious to advance the cause which he professes to have at heart, he would have devoted himself to practical remarks on the Bill, with the object of assisting the Government in passing it in an improved form, and making such suggestions to the Government as would carry out his wishes; but, instead of that, I maintain that his desire was to throw discredit on the Government for not bringing in a measure which went more thoroughly on the lines which he might choose to approve. Well, Sir, I have no doubt that it is very aggravating to hon. Gentlemen opposite that the present Government should have the settlement of this question. I have no doubt that they would prefer that this matter should stand over to the Greek Kalends rather than that the present Government should deal with it. But we are not going to be intimidated even by the swarms of Amendments the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Rugby Division of Warwick has proposed and contemplates proposing.

Mr. COBB: I said nothing about "swarms."

Mr. RITCHIE: I withdraw the word "swarms."

Mr. COBB: I think that the right hon. Gentleman will see that my Amendments are perfectly fair Amendments.

Mr. RITCHIE: I withdraw the word "swarms," but adhere to what I have said previously. The hon. Gentleman alluded to the Paper of Amendments. I have looked through the Amendments, and I find that the hon. Gentleman has certainly embodied in his Amendments matters which I should have thought would have been sufficient for a separate Act of Parliament in themselves. Well, as I have said, notwithstanding the evident intention of endeavouring to smother this Bill by Amendments at this time of the year, the Government do not intend to be intimidated, but to make the best efforts they can to pass the Bill into law this Session. One very curious statement the hon. Gentleman made, among the many curious statements made in the course of this debate. He said that if one thing showed more clearly than another that this Bill was introduced for electioneering purposes, it was the names which are on the back of it. Then he said I had some little claim to put my name on the back of the Bill, and he also acknowledged that the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Local Government Board (Mr. Long) might also have some claim to do that; but, in his opinion, it was simply monstrous that the name of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) should appear on the back of the Bill, and that clearly showed, to his mind, what the object of the Government was. It was not to advance the cause of the labourers by giving them allotments, but to influence elections. Now, as to the appearance of the name of my right hon. Friend (Mr. E. Stanhope) on the back of the Bill, let me say that the right hon. Gentleman has taken an interest in allotments probably for a longer period than the hon. Gentleman the Member for Rugby, and I have a recollection that my right hon. Friend served upon a Royal Commission in connection with the employment of women and children in agriculture, and that he, as a Sub-Commissioner, made one of the most valuable Reports upon the very question which the hon. Gentleman expresses so much interest about, the provision of grass land for the purpose of obtaining milk for the labouring classes. I must say that I think the hon. Gentleman was driven very hard indeed when he had to advance that as a reason to show that the action of the Government is not an honest one, but an electioneering one. Now, Sir, several of my hon. Friends have made various suggestions to the Government in connection with buildings and other matters of detail, of which I have taken careful note, and will give careful consideration to. I have already stated that in connection with buildings I will take care that Amendments are introduced which will remedy the defect in the Bill which has been pointed out. I think I have now touched upon most of the suggestions and criticisms which have been made to-night. I do not propose to trouble the House further on the subject, having so recently addressed them upon it, but I have again to say that the Government greatly appreciate many of the speeches which have been made from both sides of the House, and warmly welcome the promises which have been made by many hon. Gentlemen to whom they are politically opposed that they will render to the Government every assistance in their power in order to enable them to carry this Bill through with Amendments in the course of the present Session, and at once place within the reach of the labouring classes of this country allotments, which I believe will be fraught with great benefit to themselves and with great benefit to the community.

MR. ROUND (Essex, N.E., Harwich): I do not rise to prolong the debate unnecessarily, although I should have been glad of having an opportunity of catching your eye, Mr. Speaker, earlier in the evening. I am sure that at this time of the night the House is satisfied with the discussion which has taken place, and that they would now like to go into Committee. But, as the subject is of great interest to the agricultural constituency which I have the honour to represent, and as the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Saffron Walden Division of Essex (Mr. H. Gardner), who spoke from the opposite Benches earlier in the evening, and who represents the labourers of that constituency, which I had the honour of representing before the passing of the last Reform Bill, expressed the opinion that this Bill was a sham, I should be sorry that such an opinion of the Bill should go forth to the labourers of North Essex without contradiction by one who, at all events, from the bottom of his heart believes that this Bill is not a sham, and will not be a sham, but will be productive of very great benefits to those labourers whom the hon. Gentleman now represents. I will not continue the debate further, because I know the House does not wish for second reading speeches at this period of the evening (12.45); but I do most heartily trust that the Government will do all in their power to bring this Bill to a conclusion. I desire to ask the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) when he proposes to take the Committee stage? I trust he will take that stage as early as possible.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.): I do not wish to occupy the attention of the House for more than a couple of minutes. I simply desire to say that I believe the agricultural labourers are perfectly satisfied with the Bill as it stands, more particularly as the Government have had the courage to affirm the principle of compulsion. Without that principle I do not think the Bill would have been worth the paper it is printed upon. One word with reference to the speech of the hon. Gentleman the Member for West Nottingham (Mr. Broadhurst). The hon. Gentleman said some very hard things about the Court of Quarter Sessions, and, although he admitted he did not know much about it, he said that the object of the Court of Quarter Sessions was to prevent labourers having allotments. If the hon. Gentleman had been here, I should have referred him to the fact that this time last year a Return was issued, from which it appeared that something like 650,000 allotments were held among the 800,000 agricultural labourers in the country, and that this fact is owing to the action of the Courts of Quarter Sessions, which the hon. Member for West Nottingham holds up to derision and contempt. Any further remarks that I have to make I will reserve until the Bill gets into Committee.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1 (Short title).

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon *Monday* next.

POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANKS AND GOVERNMENT ANNUITIES BILL.

(*Mr. Raikes, Mr. Jackson.*)

[BILL 344.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): In moving the second reading of this Bill I do not intend to detain the House for many minutes. The matter has been very fully discussed in the public Press and "elsewhere" in the course of the last week or so—in fact, ever since the Bill was introduced; and yesterday my right hon. Friend the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) made an important announcement with regard to the course the Government intend to take when this Bill gets into Committee, a course which, I understand, is likely to remove many of the objections felt in some parts of the House to the Bill as it was originally introduced. It may be desirable, further, that I should say that this Bill, which is, I think, a very modest one, does not attempt to deal with the question in anything like so ambitious a spirit as characterized some of its predecessors. In the first place, it was addressed to three main points. The first of these was a power which it was proposed to give to depositors in Post Office Savings Banks to deposit a larger sum than £30 annually. That is to say, it was proposed to raise the limits that the existing law fixes for such deposits from £30 to £50. But it was not proposed at any time to increase the total amount which a depositor in the Post Office Savings Bank could have there beyond the sum of £150, which is the existing limit. Further, a certain amount of misconception appears to have arisen upon this point, and a great many gentlemen connected with the banking interest in the country appear to have become much agitated on the subject; they believed that there was under the provision in this Bill some probability that the total deposit of £150 might be indefinitely exceeded. It was also suggested, equally without any sufficient ground, that this Bill contained a provision by which the rule which restricts a depositor at the present time to having only one account at a Post Office Savings Bank might be evaded; and it was suggested, or at least alleged, that under this Bill it would be possible for a depositor to have a multiplicity of these accounts. There was no foundation for that suggestion. I only mention it to show how much misunderstanding has arisen in the country in regard to the provisions of this measure. I dare say some blame attached to the Post Office owing to the form in which the Bill has been drafted not being sufficiently clear. But I have met the opponents of the measure in what I think they admit to be a fair spirit by promising them that, although the Bill does not contain the things they object to, I will make it clear that no such intention existed by introducing words. But hon. Gentlemen still continue to object to the provision, which the Bill undoubtedly did originally contain, that the limit to an annual deposit should be raised from £30 to £50; and as I consider their opposition was not very well founded, and not likely to advance the interests even of those who were the most active in fomenting it, I should have been prepared to ask the House to accept that clause as part of the Bill as far as the original opposition was concerned, because there can be no doubt that even if such a provision was not very largely availed of by the working classes, yet the fact that it had been made a part of the law of the land would have encouraged and stimulated habits of thrift. I believe that at the present time there are very few subjects so largely talked about as the promotion of thrift amongst the working classes. If that clause had been pressed it would have given the House an opportunity of putting the subject to a test as to how far the expressions of sympathy with thrift amongst the working classes which we have heard are genuine and sincere amongst hon. Members. But before the Bill reached this stage we have been confronted with another difficulty. We have to remember that there are not only the Post Office Savings Banks, but other savings banks, which are generally known as Trustee Savings Banks. These Trustee Savings Banks do a great amount of business, and are in a great many cases extremely well managed, and they come to us with apparently a fair show of reason and ask that we should not give to the Post Office Savings Banks privileges and advantages which were denied to them. That appeared, on the face of it, to be a very reasonable demand. It is quite true that in drawing up this Bill I had reference entirely to those savings banks which were under the control of the Post Office, and that I limited the measure of reform which I introduced in the first instance to those particular institutions. But I could not deny that there was a good deal of force in the contention of those gentlemen who represented Trustee Savings Banks when they claimed for those banks at least fair play in conducting their business in friendly rivalry with the savings banks administered by the Post Office. Well, we have considered their objections, and we are inclined to think that, as regards other clauses of the Bill, there is sufficient ground for admitting them to the equality which they claim. But considerable difficulty was felt with regard to giving them the advantage of this 1st clause. Savings Banks which are managed by Trustees give a larger interest than that given by the Post Office Savings Banks. They are allowed to give £2 15*s*. as against the £2 10*s*. which is all that the Post Office has to offer. And then, while the amount of the deposits in any particular year in the Post Office Savings Banks would not be very largely increased by the extension of the limit, it is possible that a considerable addition might be made to the deposits in any particular year with the Trustee Savings Banks, and this might very fairly have been held to create a new financial aspect in the consideration of the question. There was certainly some additional force to be given to the objection raised by some financiers on the subject of the State receiving savings bank deposits at all if there were, as there might, perhaps, be in this instance, a very large addition to the sums deposited, seeing that in time of financial difficulty or embarrassment the Government might be called upon to repay these deposits. Under these circumstances, Her Majesty's Government have come to the conclusion that it is better on this occasion not to persevere with this particular clause; but, at the same time, I think that the matter is one which clearly must stand over for further consideration, not of course during the present Session, but in some future Session, having regard to the frequent attempts which have been made to legislate upon this question in previous years. I may mention that the late Government only two or three years ago introduced a Bill by which it was proposed not merely to increase the annual deposit, but to increase the total deposit, and also to give greater facilities for the multiplication of accounts. Therefore it is exceedingly probable that future Sessions will not pass without some attempt being made to deal with this subject in a larger manner than I have attempted to deal with it during the present Session, and those hon. Gentlemen who have been active in their opposition to the present moderate and tentative scheme may at some future time have reason to regret that they did not settle the matter when they could do so in a very easy and a very humble manner. However that may be, that part of the scheme is now definitely abandoned by the Government. The two other main provisions which it is intended to press upon the consideration of the House are these. One is contained in Clause 3 of the Bill as it now stands, and gives power to the Postmaster General for the time being to make regulations with regard to the conduct of the business of the banks. I understand that there is a very great demand for greater elasticity in the banks in the interests of the working class depositors. I will only refer to two particular matters as showing the necessity for the change. At the present time, if it is desirable to transfer a deposit—deposits such as are frequently held by friendly societies, and other bodies of that kind—from one account to another it is absolutely necessary to take out all the sum that is deposited, and to close the account so far as that is concerned, and then to open a fresh account in order to deposit in it the sum that is to be transferred. The inconvenience of this system to the working classes is considerable, and I am informed that it even extends to physical inconvenience, where it may be required to transfer an account—say from Liverpool to Rugby. The Secretary may have to take the cash, accompanied by one or two members of his committee, who may have to see the money properly deposited, and take it from one post office to another. In this way great trouble and inconvenience is incurred in the case of working men, who have the right to look to the Legislature for facilities in the way of saving, and who have a right to object to hindrances being placed in their path in connection with such a matter. Another question deserving consideration is the question of nomination. Under the existing law the depositor in a savings bank is allowed to deposit £100 in the shape of a nomination—that is to say, he may nominate a person who is to receive it at his death. The Postmaster General on the death of the depositor can pay over the £100 to the nominee without further trouble, and without the necessity for a will or any other legal formality. But, as the law now stands, if there should happen to be an accumulation of interest, and that £100 has exceeded the limit and maximum of £100, the nomination becomes void, and instead of the depositor's nomination being carried out in favour of any particular person whom he wished to nominate the money falls into his general estate, and has to be administered under the general law. It is now proposed, in the event of such a sum being slightly increased in such a manner, that it shall be competent for the Postmaster General to frame regulations in order to give effect to the wishes of the depositor. Those are two of the points upon which it is proposed to give to the Post Office power of making regulations. But exception has been taken to the fact that though these regulations are to be laid before Parliament that is the only requirement contained in the Bill as it stands, and I promised the hon. Member for the South-Western Division of Middlesex (Mr. Dixon-Hartland) that words should be introduced which should make it necessary that every such regulation should lie on the Table of the House for a certain time before becoming effective, and that opportunity should be given to Members in either House of Parliament to take the sense of Parliament before they become law. There is another small provision as to the Government annuities. At the present time, any person may purchase a Government annuity for himself through the Post Office; but it is proposed now to extend that principle so as to enable persons to purchase annuities for the benefit of the person designated, and to transfer such annuities at least for the period until they become payable. It has been thought that those annuities may be purchased for old servants. Well, a person may desire to purchase an annuity for an old servant, but may wish to keep power over it so as to make payment of it dependent upon the good conduct of the recipient. I am told that in the case of Colleges it is thought desirable that provision should be made in this way for old servants, and I am sure we shall all be glad to give such institutions the advantage of the ready method of benefiting their old *employés* in this way. The only other provision is that with which the hon. Member for North Islington (Mr. Bartley) has been so honourably associated—that is the proposal to enable a smaller sum than £10 to be invested in the public funds through the medium of the Post Offices. At the present time the working man can deposit a sum exceeding £10 through the Post Office in the funds, but he cannot deposit a less sum than £10. I should think there is no point on which there has been such a general consensus of opinion as there is upon this. All of us wish to see the working classes of this country save money and deposit it in the public funds. The result of this system, especially in France, has been extremely encouraging, and there is no doubt that at the time of great national embarrassment in France the working classes came forward with their savings in the most astonishing manner, and really enabled the country to tide over an enormous difficulty at the time when the ordinary methods of credit were difficult of application, and, if largely availed of, would have made the position of the country even more embarrassing than it was. I do not know that we shall rapidly induce the working classes of this country to make very large contributions to the public funds in this way; but, at all events, I do not think it a wise thing to deny them the opportunity, and what this Bill aims at amongst other things is to give to the working classes the opportunity of depositing sums of less than £10 in the public funds under such regulations as the Postmaster General may from time to time think desirable. I have only one other thing to say, and that is with reference to the manner in which it is proposed to give Trustee Savings Banks the same advantages as the Bill originally proposed to give the Post Office Savings Banks alone. I apologize to the House for having at this late hour spoken so long as I have done. If the Bill had come on somewhat earlier I should have been prepared to give a somewhat fuller sketch of its provisions than I have. I hope, however, I have said enough to show to the whole of the House that the Bill has been framed with a desire of benefiting the working classes of the country. I should have been glad if I had been able to introduce a more comprehensive measure; but I cannot help thinking that the House will be unwilling to lose the opportunity to pass even such a Bill as this, having regard to the objects to which it is directed, and the machinery by which it is hoped to carry out these objects.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Raikes.*)

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): I rise to express regret that the Government should have given way to the opposition, and should have agreed to withdraw the first and most important clause of the Bill. The right hon. Gentleman has correctly said that it is a very modest proposal—a much more modest proposal than those which have been brought forward by his Predecessors in Office. I cannot but think that there has been much misapprehension on this matter. The sole object of that proposal was to increase the limit of money which might be deposited in the Post Office Savings Banks from £30 to £50. It was not intended, as I understand it, to increase the limit of the maximum amount which any person might deposit in the savings banks. Limited in that way it appears to me that the proposal would have been an exceedingly wise one. It would have been a great encouragement to thrift on the part of a large number of persons in this country, and I believe it was eminently worthy of the consideration of this House. I cannot but think that if the right hon. Gentleman had pressed his proposal he would have obtained general supporters for it in quarters, perhaps, where he does not expect it, and would have been able to defeat the opposition which, to my mind, is of a somewhat interested character. I do not know whether it would be possible for any private Member to raise the question, notwithstanding the decision the Government have arrived at. I do not know whether it would be possible for a private Member to press the Government on, and try and induce them to agree to the clause they have abandoned. Under any circumstances, I trust that the clause is only abandoned for this year, and that next year we shall have the proposal made again. I am not impressed with the argument as to treating the private savings banks on grounds of equality. At the present moment, and after the question that has been raised, I do not, at all events, think it would be wise at this moment to extend to them this power, and I think the right hon. Gentleman is wise in restricting it to Post Office Savings Banks. With regard to the other proposals of the right hon. Gentleman, I have no objection to make to them, although I do not quite understand the arrangement with regard to the assignment of annuities which he has alluded to; but, no doubt, when we come to the clause in Committee he will explain this point more fully. Finally, I think no one will doubt that there is wisdom underlying the proposal to enable depositors to invest sums of less than £10 in the Government Funds.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): I have heard with great pleasure the determination of the Government to give increased facilities to depositors in the Post Office Savings Bank for purchasing small portions of Government Stock. We are now all agreed that it is a great social and economical advantage that the mass of the people should become possessors of Consols. It is only a few years since this scheme has been understood by the people. I remember the time when persons were ignorant of the very meaning of the word Consols. When the National Penny Bank, in 1875, commenced selling small portions, we had persons come in and ask whether Consols were a special sort of coals, or something to eat; but since then Government Stock to the extent of no less a sum than £2,500,000 sterling has been purchased by some 30,000 depositors in the Post Office Savings Bank, and the system has shown itself to be one of the most effective means by which the general well-being of the poorer classes may be promoted. With regard to the £50 limit of deposits, I regret extremely that the Government have been frightened by the shadow of the bankers, and I beg to give Notice that in Committee I shall move that the clause in the Bill which deals with this subject, and which the Government propose to withdraw, be retained in the Bill. I can see no reason why the clause should be given up. In my opinion, the Post Office Savings Banks have been of great advantage to the bankers, because, although the former have collected £50,000,000, the latter have never been in so prosperous a condition as they are now. The fact is clear that the more you promote thrift and habits of economy among the poorer classes, by enabling them to make small investments, the better it is for the bankers and the community at large; and I have no hesitation in saying that many hundreds of people who now have accounts with bankers began by saving in the Post

Office Savings Banks. In this way I am sure that millions of money have rolled into the coffers of the bankers; and there never was, in my opinion, a more short-sighted policy on the part of the bankers than that of opposing this proposal of the Government, for, under this clause, the maximum deposit would be reached in three instead of five years, and therefore the depositors would be so much sooner ready to deal with the ordinary banks. This is a question affecting the working classes, whose thrift and well-being we should, particularly in these times, endeavour to promote. With regard to the Trustee Savings Banks, it is, of course, reasonable and proper that they should have similar facilities to those proposed in this Bill; but as regards the question of the £50 limit, I think they stand in a totally different position from that of the Post Office Savings Banks. The latter were really established because the Trustee Savings Banks were not considered so sound and satisfactory as they ought to be; a good many of them had come to grief, and it was in consequence of that that the establishment of Post Office Savings Banks took place. I know that those which now remain are thoroughly good; but the fact is as I have stated it. It was expected that the establishment of the Post Office Savings Banks would shut up all the Trustee Savings Banks; but that has not been found to be the case; on the contrary, the establishment of the Post Office Savings Banks has made those of the Trustee Savings Banks that were sound more prosperous than ever, and the same will continue to be the result with the ordinary banks, as I have endeavoured to show. It must be understood that the liability of the Trustees of the Trustee Savings Banks depends on their voluntary transactions. There is no law which enforces the legal management of these institutions; there is a heavy responsibility on the Trustees, and the question is whether we should increase it in the way that has been proposed. I hope the Government will consider the question as to the £50 limit in the Post Office Savings Banks an open question, and not a Government one, and then I am sure that if a Division is taken on the question of the limit of £50 hon. Members on both sides of the House will approach the question with open minds. This is not a Party question, and it is one which I think ought to be voted upon by hon. Members solely on the merits of the case. Although we are proud of the savings banks holding £100,000,000, this sum is only, after all, what is spent on alcohol in 40 weeks; and I believe that if you can increase these facilities for thrift among the people, making such institutions as Savings Banks rivals with the public-house which now stands at the corner of every street, you will build up the well-being of the people to a greater extent than you can by many a more pretentious Act of Parliament.

Mr. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.): I wish to express my regret that the 1st clause is not to remain in the Bill. The concession that is made by the right hon. Gentleman to the thrifty portion of the working classes is so small that I am not at a loss to understand how it is that any body of men in the country should have thought it worth while to trouble themselves about it. It seems to me useless to lecture men about thrift, and then deny them the means of exercising it. It has been said that there is no demand for the extension of the limit. I think, if hon. Members will study the Returns issued from time to time to the House, they will gather that there is an absolute necessity for extending the limit, because there are somewhere about 137,000 depositors of £30 each in the Post Office Savings Banks, and it is reasonable to suppose that many of these would have exceeded this amount if the circumstances of the case had not been against them. The present arrangement is chargeable with this absurdity—that if a man manages to get £30 in the bank in the early part of the year, and through sickness has to withdraw £20, he cannot make the amount up to £30 again during the whole remaining portion of the year. A more absurd restriction was never introduced, and therefore I hope the Government will see their way to retain the 1st clause in the Bill. I have had addressed to me a great number of letters in favour of extending the limit, but not one against extension. I am afraid the Government is placed, however, in a rather awkward position, for they seem to have been beset by the bankers on one hand and by the Trustee Banks on the other. With regard to the bankers, I leave their absurdity to be dealt with by the public by-and-bye; but with regard to the Trustee Savings Banks, I think the Government have acted wisely in not applying to them the provision contained in the 1st clause under existing circumstances. This is not the time to go into the question of the constitution and management of these banks; but I could bring before the House some sad facts in connection with them over and above those which I have already brought forward in a series of Questions from February last up to the present. There are some useful things in the Bill, and among them is the concession with regard to the transfer of money. I am glad the Government have made the first step, and I hope we may be able to deal with this matter more completely hereafter. I do not yet like the notion of extending the same facilities to Trustee Banks as are proposed for Post Office Banks, and I shall have to look over the regulations before I can give my consent to them. I wish the Government could now see their way to test the feeling of the House with regard to the 1st clause; but but if it is felt that the pressure is too strong for them to maintain their position with regard to this part of the Bill, I should like them to leave the question to be dealt with by both sides of the House, and then I believe we shall be able to decide it satisfactorily. My wish is that, in the interest of the working classes, the Government will stand firmly on their Bill.

MR. MACLURE (Lancashire, S.E., Stretford): I must dissent at once from some of the remarks of the hon. Member for the North-East Division of Bethnal Green (Mr. Howell), and, at the same time, point out that the Trustee Savings Banks are the pioneers of thrift in this country. I cannot but express my regret that one who professes to represent the working classes, as the hon. Member does, should not have launched into this discussion as the apologist of the Trustee Banks. I must thank most heartily the right Gentleman the Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) for the full consideration he has given to the representations made to him by the Trustee Savings Banks. I shall withdraw my Amendment; but I at once disclaim the arguments which have been used by hon. Gentlemen opposite, and at the proper time I shall give an explanation of them. I do not object to the limit being raised to £50, provided that the provision extends equally to Trustee Savings Banks. Put any restrictions you like as to examination of accounts, or anything of that kind; but I do not see why such valuable institutions as Trustee Savings Banks should be denied the same privileges as the Post Office.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): I should like to be permitted to make a few remarks in reply to some observations made in the course of the debate. I, in common with many hon. Members of this House, much regret the opposition which the bankers have made to the 1st clause of this Bill, and I think there was a great deal of force in the observations which fell from my hon. Friend the Member for North Islington (Mr. Bartley), that the encroachments of Post Office Savings Banks and also of Trustee Savings Banks would not diminish the custom of banks, but would tend to create a class who might afterwards be a banking class. I can assure the House that the surrender of the 1st clause is not owing to the Memorial signed by 50 hon. Members which has been forwarded to the Government, but in consequence of the difficulty which has arisen in connection with Trustee Savings Banks to which the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Stretford Division of Lancashire (Mr. Maclure) has alluded. A very large and influential representative deputation from the Trustee Savings Banks came to the Treasury, and urged in the strongest way upon us the inexpediency, from their point of view of giving facilities to the Post Office Savings Banks which were not to be given *pari passu* to themselves. I do not entirely accept their argument, on account of several circumstances which have already been pointed out. They do not offer the same absolute security as Post Office Savings Banks, and they give a higher rate of interest. But, at the same time, when we saw these gentlemen, representing large institutions throughout the whole of the country, directing their energies against the 1st clause of this Bill, unless it was extended to them, a course we did not see our way to adopt, we thought it was impossible to press at this period of the Session the 1st clause of this Bill in the face of that opposition, added to the other opposition which otherwise we should not have felt called upon to yield to. That is the reason which has led to the course we have adopted; and with reference to the request that this matter should be treated as an open question, I think I must remind the House that when the Government say, in order to secure the second reading of a Bill, that they surrender a part of the Bill, they must maintain that declaration. It would not be fair for the Government, after having stated upon the second reading that they will agree to the omission of Clause 1 to use their endeavours at subsequent stages to get the clause reinstated. I hope it may not be the case, as it has been alleged, that by sacrificing this clause we are arresting the progress of thrift. I should very much like depositors to be able to increase their annual deposits to £50. It is asserted that the increase from £30 to £50 in the deposits might possibly stand in the way of that investment by depositors which nearly every Member in the House considers a better mode of investment—namely, in Consols for themselves. There is a certain danger in the increased aggregate, not from the point of view of the banker, but from the point of finance. I trust that if there is disappointment in regard to the refusal of the increase, there will be some satisfaction at the opportunity of largely increased investments in Consols. We had a difficulty in refusing the suggestion of the Trustee Savings Banks that the same facilities should be extended to them as were to be given to Post Office Savings Banks. They claimed, and this is certainly an important point, that at the present time you can change an account from a Trustee Savings Bank to the Post Office, and *vice versâ*, without any trouble whatever; whereas, if Trustee Savings Banks were placed on a different footing, there would arise a difficulty in regard to these transfers which have hitherto taken place without difficulty.

Mr. DWYER GRAY (Dublin, St. Stephen's Green): We are accustomed to announcements of alteration of policy on the part of the Government. Sometimes they are made by the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith), and sometimes, as now, by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen). I am not in any way identified with the banking interest; but I am very gratified at the announcement that Clause 1 is to be abandoned, because, whether the clause would be a benefit to England or not, I hold it would be most injurious to Ireland. Either the clause would have no effect at all, or it would increase the amounts of deposits. If it increased the amounts of deposits, it would increase them at the expense of some Irish method of investment. The money would be diverted either from Irish banks or from other sources of investment in Ireland to London, and that would be an injury and an impoverishment of the entire community. Now, having received full notice both from the right hon. Gentleman the present Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes), and also from the right hon. Gentleman the late Postmaster General (Mr. Shaw Lefevre), that this clause is only postponed, and not abandoned, I trust the Irish Members and the Irish public will be warned, and will take care that when the proposal comes on again in an enlarged and, therefore, in a more formidable form, they are prepared for some better organized opposition to it. It is extremely easy for us to show that, while we have no objection to any reasonable method of encouraging thrift, we have the strongest objection to devices which will deplete whatever poor resources Ireland at present possesses by transferring them to a greater or less extent to England. I wonder the right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General made any allusion at all to Clause 2, because the effective portion of Clause 2 is the same as to the increase differently proposed to be made by Clause 1. As I understand the case, it removes the restriction of the total accumulation, which was, I believe, £200. While it is not permissible under the law as it stands, or as it will stand even if this Bill passes, that a single depositor should have more than £150 upon actual direct deposit, it is permissible it should accumulate by another means if he leaves the interest undrawn. The same argument which induced the right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General to abandon Clause 1 ought to induce him to leave the law with regard to the total amount of the accumulation unchanged, pending the introduction of his more ambitious scheme next year. I should like to call the attention of the right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General to one matter. While I think the restriction of the total amount of deposits most necessary, and while it must be enforced by some sanction, I think the present method of enforcement, and the present punishment inflicted for its breach, is most cruel; and I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he will consider the propriety of introducing some clause, either in his regulations, or, if necessary, in this Bill, by which some lesser punishment will be inflicted upon a depositor who has wrongfully opened two accounts and exceeded the limit of investment. I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether, instead of confiscating the entire amount invested in such cases, it would be sufficient to confiscate say, 10 per cent, or something of that kind? I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General is prepared to reconsider the question raised on both sides of the House as to what reason there is for restricting in any one year the deposits to £30. If a man deposits £30 at the beginning of the year, and he has some necessity for drawing it out, you restrict him from depositing at all during the remainder of the year? If you are inclined to encourage thrift without interfering with the ordinary banking of the country, why not remove that difficulty? Why not permit a man, if he has some necessity for drawing money out of the bank, to put it back again whenever he has the money? Such a state of things does not prevail in respect to ordinary banks in which a man invests, draws out, and reinvests millions in the course of a year. I would be most delighted to vote with the right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General for the removal of this very ridiculous restriction. If, however, the increasing of the total limit is proceeded with it will certainly meet with my strongest opposition, because it can only have the effect of taking away deposits from Irish banks which must be used for the encouragement of Irish industry and Irish trade.

MR. RAIKES: As regards the question of forfeiture, it is questionable how far the Postmaster General has discretion at the present time. I have ventured to exercise some discretion in more than one instance. The question of allowing a man to reinvest in the course of the same year up to the maximum of £30 has formed matter for very careful consideration on the part of the Government, and I admit there is a great deal to be said for it. But, at the same time, it cannot be forgotten that if you treat deposits in savings banks as current accounts, and not as deposit accounts, you put them on an entirely new footing. It is quite clear that when the Government pays so large an amount as 2½ per cent upon deposits that must be paid on a deposit account and not on a current account. The Government is certainly not inclined to take up this knotty question upon the present Bill. There is, no doubt, a great deal of weight in what the hon. Gentleman the Member for the St. Stephen's Green Division of Dublin (Mr. Dwyer Gray) has said with regard to Ireland. I understand that smaller sums are deposited in private banks in Ireland than in private banks in England, and therefore there is more force in what is called the banker's opposition in regard to Ireland than in regard to England. As to raising the accumulated deposit above £200, the Government have, after weighing the various arguments which have been addressed to the point, come to the conclusion that this is a proper and legitimate limit to the power of deposit.

THE CHAIRMAN: The right hon. Gentleman is rather exceeding the limits of the indulgence accorded to him.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Tuesday* next.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO BILL [*Lords*].

(*Sir Henry Holland.*)

[BILL 368.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Sir HENRY HOLLAND) (Hampstead): I beg to move the second reading of this Bill. It is a very small measure, affecting two of our Colonies There has been great distress in two of our West Indian Colonies; and it is, therefore, thought desirable to reduce expenditure and the Colonial Establishments. This object is best effected by the union of those two Colonies. The Legislative Council of Tobago and the Council of Trinidad have agreed to this Union. The Bill will effect that object; and, therefore, I propose it.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Sir Henry Holland,*)—put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *To-morrow.*

BRITISH SETTLEMENTS BILL [*Lords*].

(*Sir Henry Holland.*)

[BILL 369.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Sir HENRY HOLLAND) (Hampstead): I beg also to move the second reading of this Bill. It is a very small Colonial measure; but is important in this respect, that, in the first place, it deals with a defect in former Acts arising from the word commission. It will enable a Court of Appeal to be established in one Colony, where appeals can be heard from another Colony. It will enable a Court of Appeal to be set up in Queensland, where appeals from New Guinea can be heard.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Sir Henry Holland,*)—put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *To-morrow.*

PUBLIC WORKS LOANS BILL.

(*Mr. Jackson, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Herbert Maxwell.*)

[BILL 364.] COMMITTEE.

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1 *agreed to.*

Clause 2 (50 & 51 Vict. 16).

MR. MARJORIBANKS (Berwickshire): I wish, on page 1, Clause 2, at the end, to add the following new sub-section:—

> "The Public Works Loan Commissioners may, under the powers conferred on them by 'The Harbours and Passing Tolls Act, 1861,' if they are satisfied as to the security offered, make loans to Local Harbour Authorities, not exceeding £10,000 in any one particular case, to enable such authorities to consolidate existing debts incurred for harbour construction or improvement; provided always it shall be certified by the Board of Trade that the expenditure for which such debts have been incurred was reasonable and beneficial."

Sir Henry Holland

I beg to move this Amendment, in order to give effect to the remarks I made last night. I think I can best illustrate the reason for this Amendment by mentioning the case of a small harbour on the Coast of Fife — Pittenweem — with which I am very well acquainted. In this instance, the small village has built itself a harbour, and the Harbour Authorities have thereby incurred a debt of £4,000 to the local bank, for which they have given their harbour dues as security, together with the "common good" — the burgh property — which is of the value of £350 a-year. That the security is good, the House may be satisfied from the fact that the bank advances the money at no greater rate of interest than 4 per cent. Well, those Harbour Authorities want £3,000 or £4,000 more. They go to the Public Works Loans Commissioners, and ask for a loan; but the Public Works Loans Commissioners say—"We cannot advance you this money, as we must put out our money at the first charge." Now, there is plenty of security for the whole sum of £8,000; and what I want to do is to enable the Public Works Loans Commissioners in this case to consolidate the debt, and to advance the money for the whole purpose, seeing that the security is sufficient. I hold that this is quite consistent with the policy which the present Government has stated in their recent Memorandums. They have laid it down that we should only help harbours of this sort by way of loan, and not by way of grant, and that it is necessary to make the loans upon sufficient security. They have also laid it down that fishery harbours, especially when belonging to poor fishermen, should be very favourably considered, and that public Trusts should be more favourably considered than works promoted in the interests of private companies. These conditions all apply to the case I am quoting, which is only an illustration of many other similar ones. The Government may not agree to the wording of the Amendment; and, in that case, I should be willing to withdraw now, in order that it might be brought up in an amended form on Report.

Amendment proposed,

> In page 1, Clause 2, at end, add new sub-section "The Public Works Loan Commissioners may, under the powers conferred on

them by 'The Harbours and Passing Tolls Act 1861,' if they are satisfied as to the security offered, make loans to local Harbour Authorities not exceeding £10,000 in any one particular case, to enable such authorities to consolidate existing debts incurred for harbour construction or improvement, provided always it shall be certified by the Board of Trade that the expenditure for which such debts have been incurred was reasonable and beneficial."—(*Mr. Marjoribanks.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): I am sorry that I cannot accept the Amendment made by the right hon. Member; but I desire to point out that really this would alter in a very essential particular the principles of the Act under which this money can be lent. It is true that we inserted in the Public Works Loans Bill a clause relating to giving increased powers of rating; but that was no new principle, it was merely an extension of the principle already admitted with regard to Urban Authorities, and it was merely extending the principle to Rural Authorities. Under the Harbours and Passing Tolls Acts as the right hon. Gentleman knows, there is no power at present to lend money to pay off existing debts, and there is no power, therefore, to lend money for the purpose of consolidating existing debts. This Amendment would be such an important change in the principle of the Act that I think it would hardly find its proper place in this annual measure—the Public Works Loans Bill. There is, I think, another objection. I cannot see myself how you could stop at loans not exceeding £10,000 if the principle of the Amendment were admitted and were found to be useful, and I do not deny that it would be found very useful in the case of these small harbours, but manifestly the advantage of consolidating loans in the case of large harbours would be a different thing—if the principle I say were once admitted it would extend to larger loans The right hon. Gentleman knows that there have been many applications made to the Public Works Loan Commissioners in connection with some of the largest docks and harbour works in the Kingdom. If it was found that any considerable financial saving could be effected by adopting the principle recommended, and if it were found that such a power as this would enable the authorities to construct or extend existing works we should have to face endless applications. I know that the right hon. Gentleman takes great interest in these small harbours, but I trust that having had an opportunity of placing on record his views of the subject he will be satisfied with that on this occasion, and will not press his Amendment.

MR. MARJORIBANKS: I certainly will not press it at this hour of the night and in the present state of the House if the Government think they cannot accept it; but I do hope that during the Recess the Government will endeavour to take measures to effect what the hon. Gentleman himself appears to think a very admirable object.

MR. ANSTRUTHER (St. Andrew's, &c.): If the debts could be consolidated in the manner suggested by the right hon. Gentleman of the Harbour Authorities it would allow for the repayments of interest and the repayment of capital at the same time. A new sum provided under such an arrangement as that suggested would enable Harbour Authorities to carry out improvements which are very necessary, in fact which are almost essential for the carrying on of the work which they of necessity took in hand. I quite admit the force of the argument of the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) that it is impossible in a money Bill of this kind which is an annual Bill to introduce a new principle into the Harbours and Passing Tolls Act. But what I should like very much to receive will be some sort of assurance from the hon. Gentleman as to what will be done in the future in this matter. I should like to know whether or not Her Majesty's Government will take into consideration the desirability of passing some measure to reform this Act in order to enable this power to be given to Local Authorities with reference, if not to such large concerns as those to which the hon. Gentleman has referred, at any rate to those small fishing harbours which are in much more struggling circumstances, and which I think have proved themselves deserving the support of Her Majesty's Government.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Clause *agreed to.*

Remaining Clause *agreed to.*

Bill *reported*, without Amendment; Bill to be read the third time *To-morrow*.

MOTION.

HERRING FISHERY (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of Colonel Malcolm, Bill to amend the Herring Fishery (Scotland) Acts; and for other purposes, *ordered* to be brought in by Colonel Malcolm, Mr. Finlay, and Mr. Hozier.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 372.]

House adjourned at half after two o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Saturday, 13*th August*, 1887.

The House met at Twelve of the clock.

MINUTES.]—Supply—*considered in Committee*—Civil Service Estimates; Class IV.—Education, Science, and Art, Vote 1

Public Bills — *Ordered* — *First Reading* — District Lunatic Asylums (Ireland) Officers' Superannuation * [375].

Committee — Metropolitan Police (*re-comm.*)* [285]—r.p.

Third Reading—Public Works Loans * [364], and *passed*.

QUESTIONS.

CIVIL SERVICE — PROMOTION TO LOWER DIVISION CLERKSHIPS.

Mr. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether he will now fulfil his promise to state to the House the decision of the Treasury with regard to the promotion of meritorious writers to Lower Division Clerkships, in accordance with the Minute of December last?

The SECRETARY (Mr. Jackson) (Leeds, N.), in reply, said, that, as he had already stated, he was very anxious to make these promotions; but he had not yet the whole information necessary to enable him to do so, and therefore he was not in a position to give the information.

Mr. PICKERSGILL reminded the hon. Gentleman that on the 20th of July he said he would be able to make a definite statement in a day or two on the subject; and asked what had happened since which could not then be foreseen to cause a delay of about three weeks?

Mr. JACKSON said, the hon. Member could have very little knowledge of the enormous amount of work which had been imposed on the officials of the Treasury during the last three months. The delay in making the promotions had been caused entirely by want of time to go through the whole of the examination papers sent in. He very much regretted the delay; but it was unavoidable.

Mr. PICKERSGILL asked, whether the hon. Gentleman could now state definitively when he would be able to give the information?

Mr. JACKSON said, that if he could state the time definitively he would have already have stated it; but the hon. Member had already called his attention to the fact that he was rash enough to say that "in a few days" he would be able to give a definite answer; and it would be very undesirable again to give a pledge which it might not be in his power to fulfil.

CRIMINAL LAW—ISRAEL LIPSKI, CONVICTED OF MURDER.

Mr. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.W.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, If he has seen the statement contained in *The Pall Mall Gazette* of the 12th August as to the statement of Mr. Justice Stephen's belief in Israel Lipski's innocence?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): The only statement I have seen in *The Pall Mall Gazette* of the 12th instant, in reference to the case of Israel Lipski, is that Mr. Justice Stephen and Mr. Poland laid great stress on certain portions of the evidence; but admitted, it is reported, that there was something to be said in the prisoner's favour.

Mr. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM asked, whether the right hon. Gentleman had seen the fifth edition of the same paper, which contained a full statement with regard to Lipski's case?

Mr. MATTHEWS: No; I have not.

RAILWAYS (ENGLAND AND WALES) — ACCIDENT ON THE MIDLAND RAILWAY.

Mr. HALLEY STEWART (Lincolnshire, Spalding) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether an inquiry will be ordered by the Board into an accident which occurred on the Midland line, shortly before 9 p.m. on Thursday 11th August, when a passenger train for Mansfield, soon after leaving the Nottingham Midland Station, collided with a light engine standing near the bridge, and damage was done both to rolling stock and permanent way, and six passengers complained of being severely shaken; and, whether he will further inquire whether this accident is in any way due to the present state of affairs on the Midland line?

The SECRETARY (Baron Henry De Worms) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): The Board of Trade have directed an inquiry to be made by an Inspector into the cause of the accident referred to.

THE ALLOTMENTS BILL.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether, considering the favour with which the Allotments Bill for England has been received in the House, and the rapid progress made with it, and considering also that Ireland was already provided for in this respect, while Scotland was left out in the cold, he would immediately introduce a Bill by which municipalities in populous places might be enabled to provide gardens for the labouring classes?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): I will consider the question.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL said, he hoped that in considering the matter the right hon. Gentleman would take care that it should not happen that there should be a Technical Education Bill and an Allotments Bill for England, while Scotland got neither.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Mr. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee) asked, with reference to the Orders Nos. 7 and 8 on the Paper (Committee on the Trinidad and Tobago Bill and the British Settlements Bill), Whether it was the fact that those two Bills had been read a second time before copies had been distributed to hon. Members; why those Bills should have been so long delayed; why they should be proceeded with so hurriedly now; and, whether, in consideration of the circumstances in which those Bills had been laid before the House, the Committee stage would be postponed until Members were better acquainted with the Bills?

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster), in reply, said, that as no Notice had been given of the Question, he had been unable to confer with the Secretary of State for the Colonies (Sir Henry Holland); but he was informed that the Bills were circulated yesterday; that there had been no opposition to them; and that they were purely formal measures; and, therefore, looking to the period of the Session, it would not be right to postpone them.

Mr. E. ROBERTSON said, he might be allowed to say that they had not been circulated yesterday.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I did not get one.

Mr. F. S. POWELL (Wigan) said, that if it was to be a question of testimony, he could say that he got his at 9 o'clock yesterday morning.

Mr. E. ROBERTSON said, it surely could not be that they had been distributed to only one side of the House? But, in any case, they were not merely formal Bills. One was a very important measure, and he would resist it.

Mr. W. H. SMITH: I will communicate with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Colonies, who has charge of the Bills; but I regret that the hon. and learned Member should oppose measures which are only formal.

Mr. E. ROBERTSON: One of them is very important.

THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON LOSS OF LIFE AT SEA.

Sir JOHN LUBBOCK (London University) asked the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Central Bradford, Whether his attention had been called to the reports in the newspapers purporting to be the conclusions of the Royal Commission on the subject of Loss of Life at Sea?

Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): As Chairman of the Royal Commission on Loss of Life at Sea, I must express my great surprise at seeing what purported to be the recommendations of the Commission published in *The Times* of yesterday, and still more at what purported to be fuller extracts from the Report of the Commission and from alleged Reports of dissentient Members of the Commission in *The Standard* of to-day. I can only say that these conclusions and Reports are very incomplete, and quite unauthorized, and that the position of the minority has been inaccurately stated. It is true that the Commission, at its last meeting, substantially and almost unanimously arrived at a conclusion; but their Report has not yet received its final revision, nor has it yet been signed; nor have the reservations of a small minority of the Commission been laid before the Commission itself in their final form. I need hardly point out that until the Report has been presented to Her Majesty in the usual form it cannot properly be made public. I must ask the public, therefore, to reserve its judgment until the full Report can be issued. The Commission has great reason to complain that the incomplete documents laid before it have been sent to some of the London papers; and I shall make strict inquiries as to how this has occurred.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

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SUPPLY—CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES.

SUPPLY—*considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

CLASS IV.—EDUCATION, SCIENCE, AND ART.

(1.) £1,658,807, to complete the sum for Public Education.

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Sir WILLIAM HART DYKE) (Kent, Dartford): Mr. Courtney, it now becomes my duty to place before the Committee the Educational Budget for the coming year, and in doing so I am deeply conscious that I am addressing many hon. Members who have devoted a lifetime to the cause of education; and as the Estimates which I shall have the honour of placing before the Committee are those of my Predecessor, and as I have not been many months in the Office which I now hold, I venture to claim from hon. Members that indulgence which, for those reasons, I am sure they will extend to me. There is another and, perhaps, more solid reason why I should not detain the Committee at any great length on matters, at all events, which are likely to be, in the future, subject of controversy; and it is because, as the Committee is fully aware, one of the most important Commissions of modern times has collected an enormous mass of evidence, and it is only just to them to wait for their Report before we attempt to deal practically with the matters coming under their cognizance. I see behind me my right hon. Friend the Member for the University of Oxford (Sir John R. Mowbray), who is a Member of that Commission; and mindful of the remarks which he made the other evening, I do not propose to transgress the limits of the matters which fall within the scope of the inquiry of the Commission which he represents. Whatever may be the Report of the Commission, there is one thing on which I am certain we are all united, and that is that the suggestions of the Commission, and the legislative results that may follow, may be, at all events, for the solid advantage of the educational future of our country. I trust that whatever changes may come may be carried out without arousing Party spirit, or those sectarian difficulties which distinguished the legislation of some years ago. Now, if we attempt at this time to reconnoitre our position after the lapse of 17 years which have come and gone since Mr. Forster's Act was passed, I think we cannot be accused of acting with the waywardness of a child in taking up the plant just after it is set in the ground to see how the roots have grown. The lapse of those 17 years affords, at all events, some excuse for our endeavouring to see whether the system which now obtains is an absolutely perfect system, or whether it may not be remodelled to the advantage of the cause of education. With these few prefatory remarks I hope to be able to place before the House as succinctly as I can the Educational Budget of the year; and I propose, as usual, to place before the Committee the statement of the expenditure, and then to state a few facts as to the results of that expenditure, and what it has produced. The total sum required for Education in 1887-8 is £3,458,807, as against the sum of £3,402,989 for 1886-7. The Estimate for the coming financial year, therefore, shows an increase of £55,818. The annual grants for day and evening scholars show an advance of £52,502, or a sum of

£3,107,759 for 1887-8, as against £3,055,257 for 1886-7. The reason for this increase is twofold. First, there is an estimated rise in the rate of the grant per day scholar from 17*s.* 4¾*d.* to 17*s.* 5*d.*; and, secondly, there is an increase in the number of children in average attendance of 52,000—that is to say, the total number of children in average attendance estimated for the financial year is 3,552,047, as compared with 3,500,197 last financial year. The increase in average attendance beyond the last figure ascertained for 1886 is 77,366, or 2·25 per cent. This rate of increase is slightly in excess of last year's estimate—that is, 2 per cent—but is still a low estimate when compared with the rate of increase in previous years. It is obvious that as we develop, or come nearer to, the number of children who should be in daily attendance, we so far exhaust the supply, and the old rate of increase must proportionately fall off; and we are practically left to deal with the increase of population, about 50,000. I must now offer some explanation as to the increase of ¼*d.* per day scholar in regard to the grant. It does not represent the actual increase; in fact, last year the estimate was 1¼*d.* too high, as was proved by the sum actually expended. The estimate was 1½*d.*, and it turned out to be 1¼*d.* too much. The Department are, therefore, really providing, not for an increase of ¼*d.*, as would appear from the estimate, but of 1½*d.* as compared with 1886-7, although showing on the Estimates only an increase of ¼*d.* I must here mention another change which has been made, and which, I trust, will be an advantageous change, as far as the future is concerned. For drawing, £20,000 is withdrawn from the Estimate, as compared with last year, as the Science and Art Department have the sole control now as to drawing. For purposes of comparison, this sum is deducted from the Estimates of 1886-7, in order that it may be a correct one as regards the general expenditure. As to some other sub-heads, no provision has been made for increase in the staff of London, or for purposes of inspection; but there is a small increase of £1,137 and of £2,375 for salaries and inspection of a normal character. I will now turn to another matter, which I look upon as of great importance—I mean the question of pensions to teachers. I wish to show the Committee what we are doing for our teachers as compared with what was done before the passing of a certain Minute, which allowed teachers to be exempt from the limit who had entered the ranks before 1851. In 1883 there were given 17 pensions of £30; this year there are 32 of the same amounts. There were 86 pensions in 1883 of £25; that number has now risen to 226. There were 129 pensions of £20 in 1883, and now there are 265. In 1883 the total grant for pensions and gratuities was £5,580. In 1887-8 the estimate is £12,370. That is a sum which, I believe, the Committee will not grudge, although I admit that the greatest care ought to be exercised in granting these pensions. There have, however, in former years been cases of great hardship on account of our inability to grant pensions, owing to our limited funds. There is, however, a novelty, and that is an item of decrease of £1,100 for Training Colleges, which is entirely owing to the reduction in the cost of maintenance and living of the students boarded in the Colleges. The grant is restricted to 75 per cent of the expenditure, and hence the proportionate reduction of the estimate. The actual expenditure from the Vote for 1886-7 was £3,421,339, or £1,649 less than the sum voted, which was £3,422,988. The sum expended would have been less but for the exertions made to quicken the payment of grants, so that a larger number than usual were paid within the financial year. Complaints of delay are now rare; and by increased efficiency of administration only, the time that elapses between the inspection of a school and the payment of a grant has been very materially reduced. That is a brief explanation of the expenditure of the year. I would now ask the patience of the Committee while I give a few details as to the results of that expenditure; and I think that, although we have not, perhaps, moved forward so fast as many might wish, it will, at the same time, be acknowledged, when the Committee hear my statement of the results of the year, that they are fairly satisfactory. Now, what have we gained in regard to our educational position for this large outlay? The number of schools inspected in 1885 was 18,895, and in 1886 it was 19,022, showing an increase of 127. Then, as regards school accommodation, there were in 1885 4,998,000 school places, and in 1886 5,145,000, showing an increase of 147,000, or 3·56 per cent. In 1885 the number of scholars on the register was 4,412,000, and in 1886 it was 4,506,000, showing an increase of 94,000. In 1885 the number of scholars in average attendance was 3,371,000, and in 1886 it was 3,438,000, showing an increase of 67,000. The percentage of average attendance to the numbers on the register was 76·4, and in 1886 it was 76·3—a very slight decrease indeed. The percentage of passes in Standard examinations in 1885 was 85·14, and in 1886 it was 85·99. Then I come to the number of scholars examined in Standard IV. and upwards, and this is the brightest spot in the picture which I have to sketch. In 1885 the number of scholars examined in Standard IV. and upwards was 783,000, and in 1886 it was 848,000, showing an increase of 65,000 children in one year. I should like, before I close this portion of the statistics, to give the Committee the figures in reference to the teaching staff. In 1885 the number of certificated and assistant teachers was 61,616, and in 1886 it was 64,310, showing an increase of 2,694. There was also an increase in the number of pupil teachers; in 1885 it was 25,750, and in 1886 it was 27,804, showing an increase of 2,054. As far as these figures go they exhibit a very fair rate of progress, especially in the notable increase of the scholars examined in Standard IV. and upwards, which is almost exactly commensurate with the addition to the general number in average attendance. It shows, at all events, that the material turned out is of an improving character. There is only one blot, if it may be called a blot, in the figures I have read, and that is that there is a slight change for the worse in the rate of increase in average attendance. I think we may say that it has been at a standstill in the past year, and the progress of the previous year is not quite maintained, which must in a large measure be attributed to the very long and severe winter we went through which seriously impeded attendance at school in the North of England especially, the roads having been blocked up with snow. It is obvious that where the children have to walk a certain distance to school, the circumstance of the ground being covered with great heaps of snow must seriously affect the average attendance at school. On this question of attendance there are other causes—material causes—which also operate; but I may recur later on to that particular point. I should, however, like, if I am not wearying the Committe with figures, to give them the comparative increase of the number of scholars on the registers and in average attendance for each of the four years commencing in 1883. In 1883 the increase in the number on the registers was 84,000, or 2·4 per cent for that year. In 1884 the increase in the number on the registers was 64,000 or 1·5 per cent. In 1885 the increase on the registers was 75,000, or an increase of 1·73 per cent; in 1886 it was 94,000, or 2·12 per cent. The average attendance in 1883 was 112,000, or an increase of 3·7 per cent; in 1884, 146,000, or 4·67 per cent; in 1885, 98,000, or 3 per cent; and in 1886, 67,000, or 1·99 per cent. I should like to call the attention of the Committee to the fact that in 1882 there was a change made as regards registration, which, of course, affected these figures considerably for the next year or two. It would appear that while the average attendance had been increasing at a gradually reduced rate, until 1885-6, the rate of average attendance far exceeded the rate of increase in the number of scholars on the roll—that is to say, out of every 100 scholars enrolled, there were, until last year, a gradual increase as regards average attendance. But in 1886 it was stationary. I turn now to the actual results of examination, and here the record is most satisfactory. We can show a steady increase, not only in the scholars examined in Standards IV. to VII., but an equally good result as regards per centage of passes in the Standard examinations. The percentage of scholars in Standards IV. to VII. was, in 1883, 29·03; in 1884, 31·26; 1885, 32·9; and in 1886, 34·7. Hon. Members will therefore see that a steady progress has been maintained, and one that is most satisfactory as regards the results. Again, the per centage of passes in the Standard examinations was, in 1883, 82·89; in 1884, 83·58; 1885, 85·14; and in 1886, 85·99. Here also hon. Members will observe that the progress has been steady and satisfactory in every respect. Now, I should like, for one moment, to show what the result as regards Standard IV. and the higher class examinations has been since the Act of 1876, which, as hon. Members are aware, brought about compulsory attendance. I think the figures show a marvellous rate of progress. In 1876 the number of scholars examined in Standard IV. and upwards was 235,000, while in 1886, after 10 years' experience of the working of the Act, it was 848,000, or an increase of 260 per cent. The total number examined in 1876 was 1,142,000; in 1886 it was 2,445,000, or an increase of 114 per cent—that is to say, in the higher Standards, the number of children examined was increased 3½ times as rapidly as the children examined in the lower Standards. I think we ought to congratulate ourselves on such a result as that a further proof of substantial progress may be gathered from the "merit grant," which determines the standard of excellence attained by the great mass of elementary schools in the country. There are practically four degrees, as hon. Members are aware —below fair, fair, good, and excellent, —and I should like to show the percentage of schools classified under these several degrees, and for that purpose I will take the years 1884, 1885, and 1886. Taking infant schools and classes first, the children "below fair" were, in 1884, 6·95 per cent; in 1885, 4·7 per cent; and in 1886, 3·7 per cent; those who were "fair" were, in the same years, 32·95 per cent, 28·4 per cent, and 26·3 per cent; "good" were 47·65 per cent, 50 per cent, and 51·29 per cent; and "excellent" 12·45 per cent, 16·9 per cent, and 18·71 per cent respectively in the schools for the other children; and taking the same three years, the results were as follows:—"Below fair," 6·47, 6·6, and 5·65 per cent; "fair," 30·05, 28·6, and 28·63 per cent; "good," 48·97, 48·9, and 50·22 per cent; and "excellent," 14·49, 15·9, and 16·1 per cent. Now, if we take the two first as representing the moderate schools—below fair and fair—and the last two the better class of schools—good and excellent—we have this result, that in 1884 the best infant schools were 60 out of every 100, whereas they are now 70, and of those for older children the good were 63 out of every 100, and they are now 66. So far as these figures go, I think the Committee will be satisfied, although the Budget may be said to be an enormous one, having reached a magnitude which the founders of the Act of 1870, and those of us who support it, never appreciated at the time, yet, that the money is not thrown away, and considerable and active progress is being made. I should like to touch upon one or two general topics; but before doing so I may give some figures to show the increase in the number of school places, of the children on the register, the average attendance, and the grant per head. Seventeen years have now elapsed since the passing of the Act, and I do not think that this is a bad time for endeavouring to illustrate our position now, compared with what it was then. In the year 1870, when the Act was passed, there were 1,878,000 school places, 1,693,000 children were on the register, with an average attendance of 1,152,000, or 68·03 per cent, the grant per head being 9*s.* 11¼*d.* In 1886, however, there were 5,200,000 school places, 4,553,000 on the register, and 3,470,000 in average attendance, or 76·21 per cent, while the grants had increased from 9*s.* 11¼*d.* to 17*s.* 2½*d.* per scholar. Having said so much in regard to the educational expenditure, I trust I may be forgiven if before I sit down I allude to one or two subjects which, although they are in themselves minor subjects, are illustrations which may guide us in our future anticipations. In the first place, I wish to allude to the most valuable change which we have made in the year in respect of drawing. It is unnecessary, I think, to urge on the Committee the great importance of spreading and nurturing in every way we can the teaching of drawing. In reading the Report of the Commissioners on Technical Instruction there is nothing that strikes one more than the great astonishment they express as to the way in which, in contrast to the system of Continental countries, we in this country have neglected the important subject of drawing. In their Report they show how in nearly all the places abroad they found that drawing is an obligatory subject of instruction in the primary schools, and is regarded as of equal importance to writing. The number of hours devoted to the subject is frequently as many as three per week; whereas in England the subject is not only not obligatory, but in about three-fourths of our elementary schools no instruction whatever is given on this subject, and in those schools in which it is done the time rarely exceeds one hour per week. They complain of the absence of competent teachers and the want of proper models, and they make a strong recommendation that instruction in the rudiments of drawing should be incorporated with writing in all primary schools, both for girls and boys, by which also, in their opinion, writing would be much improved. Whether we have reached a stage when we should adopt that system I do not stop to discuss; but I am glad to find, not only from this Report, but from other circumstances to which I will refer, that, at all events, the people of this country are waking up to the fact that we must endeavour to make some room in our curriculum for this kind of instruction in our elementary schools. I believe that owing to the frequent changes in the application of the instruction, drawing in our elementary schools has suffered grievously. In a great many of our schools the changes in a vast number of instances are found out too late to be applied the same year. I trust that we have at last discovered a system by which we find ourselves on firm ground, which will work satisfactorily, and will not need change. In 1885 a new course of instruction in regard to drawing was adopted, and then, for the first time, it was decided that drawing should be taught in the schools and made a class subject. At the same time, the Minute of the Science and Art Department provided that the grant in drawing should not be made through that Department after March 31st of this year. The twofold system does not seem to have worked well, and the figures show a considerable decline in the number of children who learnt drawing. Of the average number of elementary schools which had adopted drawing, no less than 300 declined to be again examined under that system in 1885-6; and as regards the connection between the elementary schools and the grant from Whitehall, only 1,400 schools adopted the system in 1884-5. We know how much the teachers are pressed under the present system; and it is perfectly natural that they should look to the grants from Whitehall with a desire to gain the seventeen-and-sixpenny limit in the easiest way, by adopting the cheapest and less troublesome method of instruction. It is only human nature to expect that they would take that course. Before I leave the subject I should like to mention what the result has already been of the change which has now been made of placing the whole system—the grant and the distribution of the grant—under the control of the Science and Art Department outside the seventeen - and - sixpenny limit. By a Minute of the 8th of March, 1887, it was provided that after the 31st of that month all the grants would be paid by the Science and Art Department. Since that date, of 4,700 schools in England and Wales, 2,652 have already accepted the terms; whereas only about 1,400 schools adopt drawing under the old system. The figures I have now given show that we have advanced with great strides since this change was made, and if we take into consideration the circumstance that the notice adopting these terms in the school need only be given within six months of the termination of the school year, I think it will be agreed that the change is likely to prove eminently successful. There is another subject of a technical character, somewhat analogous, to which I should also like to refer for a few moments—I mean the teaching of cookery in our elementary schools. An enormous advance, as hon. Members are aware, has been made in the teaching of cookery in our schools, and they will also be aware of what has been done of late years to forward that question. I need not remind the Committee that at the present moment a specific grant of 4*s*. is allowed for girls who are instructed in cookery. The instruction given is not only of a theoretical character, but the scholars are also obliged to go through certain lessons of cookery with their own hands. In 1883, cookery was only taught in 420 of our schools; but now it is taught in 812 schools. The number of girls has also increased from 7,799 in 1884-5 to 24,556 in the present year. That is a most important and satisfactory change. I do not think a more welcome reform has ever been made in what I may call the internal arrangements of our educational system. There is nothing that can be more welcome to the poorer classes than the introduction of this cookery question. It is impossible to estimate the gain to a poor man's home by girls being taught thrift, economy, and cleanliness. Whether girls leave school to go into service, or remain at home, it is satisfactory to know that they had been taught home duties, and if they become wives, they will be able to make their homes happier and more comfortable, and their husbands will probably be kept at home instead of being driven away to the public-house. A further change has been made with regard to the question of cookery, which I am anxious to mention for a special reason, because, from circumstances which have come to my knowledge, I have reason to believe that in country districts the managers of schools do not seem fully aware what the result of the change is, and how it ought to be immediately and successfully applied. I allude to the change in the Code whereby we offer the grant of 4*s.* for cookery to evening schools. It is a very wide change, for it not only enables the grant to be given for girls in the evening schools, but it also throws open the evening classes to the scholars in the day schools, if they like to attend them. Therefore hon. Members will see that the grant is a generous one in this respect, as it will enable scholars to get an extra grant from the day schools by attending the classes for cookery in the evening schools. This is a most important change, and I am glad to find, from communications I have had, and from personal conversations with the Inspectors and others, that the subject of cookery is being most actively taken up. All I know is that the Inspectors are fully alive to the importance of dealing with the subject, and there is good reason to believe that the movement is not only a popular movement, but that it is steadily progressing. But that is not all. I have heard one or two objections made to the proposal on the ground that the number of hours of instruction required by the Code would be prohibitory in many cases. If hon. Members will look at the Code, they will see that there is bound up with it the necessity for 40 hours' instruction in cookery, plus the 25 hours demanded for other purposes in the evening schools. It has been urged upon me that these 40 hours are prohibitory if they are to be added to the 25, and instances have been given of the cases of girls who are employed all day in the factories. It is asked how they can possibly manage to gain the grant, because they have not the time at their disposal, plus the 25 hours that are necessary to enable them to gain the other grant? But we are spending at this moment a considerable sum in grants in connection with this question of cookery, and in one year the grant went up 38·14 per cent. This new difficulty having been raised, what I propose is that we shall give the system now inaugurated a fair trial for a year, and if we find the difficulty is a substantial one, we will make some alteration with regard to the number of hours. The suggestion has been thrown out, and I think there is something in it, that we should make some modification in the number of hours, and a like modification in the grant, and I am told that a change of that kind would be popular. I referred just now to what I consider to be a weak spot in the statement I have to make. It has reference to the school attendance, and no doubt hon. Members will point out that it is not what it ought to be. I believe this to be one o the most difficult problems that we are called upon to solve. Whatever the Commission now sitting may have to urge against it, I do feel strongly tha any radical change with regard to school attendance must be made in regard to the habits and prejudices of our people. It is only natural that I should allude to the difficulties which have occurred in the past year. I believe that much of the difficulty with regard to attendance has been due to the disastrous state of trade and agriculture. It is obviou that in the present state of agriculture with an enormous acreage laid down i grass, and the growth of cereals being largely reduced, that a large amount o labour must be driven into the large towns. These two difficulties of a depression of trade and agriculture ac and react upon one another, and instea of having a steady labouring population not liable to sudden influx, you are liabl to a large sudden access of population and too often of a shifting populatio which cannot get work, and are in grea difficulties. No doubt this is a grievou blot and difficulty in regard to the compulsory attendance of our children a school. I believe that an hon. Frien of mine—the hon. Member for Lincolnshire—who has taken the trouble t visit most of our London schools, and think we owe him a debt of gratitude for doing so—is able to state that he saw in our board schools only two many children who bore on their faces evidence of hunger, showing how impossible it is to feed the brains of those whose stomachs are starving. I know that I am touching delicate and dangerous ground. [*Cries of* "Hear, hear!"] Yes, I am aware of it; and I know that I shall be told—and I acknowledge the truth of it—that this is a Poor Law question, and that by feeding these children we shall be setting up in our schools a huge system of outdoor relief. I cannot conceive anything more impossible or absurd than to attempt such a thing as that. If we attempt anything like wholesale relief to these unfortunate children, it would be an obvious temptation to parents to manufacture hungry children and send them to the schools. That would be a most dangerous system to adopt. I think that much of the evil I am speaking of might be obviated, and I believe it is obviated as far as possible by the humanity and discretion of the school board officers. The problem is how can the whole evil be best obviated? And here I would say that one of the chief reasons why I call attention to the subject is this, that I believe the proper way to obviate the evil is by a judicious application of charity on the voluntary system, which is never absent where distress exists in our large centres. I think a great deal of good would come from the further development of the system of penny dinners. Where the system is well managed, it is made to pay. It is, I believe, a sound system, and if it were properly applied, it might be found a very great remedy for the evils to which I have referred. There is one other subject akin to this which I should like to allude to, and that is the difficulty—a very grave difficulty—which some of our poorer children suffer in some of our voluntary schools, especially in the country. With regard to the payment of fees, I know that in this matter a very great grievance is felt in many of our districts in regard to the payment of the fees of the children in voluntary schools. It is claimed that these children are not on all fours with the children attending the board schools. The parents object to having to go very long distances to receive very small sums of money—they object to appearing before the Guardians with others *in formâ pauperis*; they say that it causes a kind of stigma to be attached to them which they have no right to be asked to bear; they declare that it is unfair and unjust to many of them, who, although they could obviously and easily obtain this form of relief, would rather go without it, and prefer to suffer and say nothing rather than have the stigma of pauperism attached to their names. An effort of legislation has been made this Session with regard to the question, and I believe that as the order has been discharged, I have a right to refer to it. Under that Bill, a Committee would have been appointed in each locality to deal with the matter; but a Committee is not a responsible body, and it seems to me that it would be a dangerous system to establish, seeing that it would be a rate-charging system. There would obviously be a great temptation on the part of the Committee to gain popularity by easing individuals at the expense of the community. There would be nothing more simple and easy than for a body of three or four people discussing this question when they are living in the country, in the midst of the population affected by their decision, to be guided by motives of this kind, and I think the system would be an extremely dangerous one unless the responsibility were allowed to rest in the proper quarter. The only suggestion I have seen which would have occurred to me as likely to answer and work fairly well is this, that there should not be a separate Committee, but a Sub-Committee of those who are responsible—the Guardians themselves for instance—to deal with the matter.

MR. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside): They would not do it.

SIR WILLIAM HART DYKE: My right hon. Friend says they would not do it. Perhaps not; but at all events that would be a fair effort. Such a Sub-Committee as I have described should meet elsewhere than at the place where the Board usually meets, and at a different time to discuss these matters. Indeed, they might meet in another building. In this way I think the difficulty which the right hon. Gentleman apprehends might to some extent be obviated, and we might avert the stigma which would otherwise attach to the parents of applying *in formâ pauperis*. I admit that this proposal may be found impossible to work, but I merely threw it out as a suggestion. I, however, am certain of this, that the difficulty must be met in some way or other, and I have no doubt we shall receive valuable assistance from the Commission now sitting. I have only one other subject to deal with before sitting down. I should like to give one or two figures to the Committee with regard to the vexed question of payment by results. I am not going to argue on the merits or demerits of the system of payment by results. We know the importance of the system, which is very much condemned in some quarters, and whatever changes are made in the future with regard to it, I am quite sure that there is nothing which can have a more important bearing, either for good or for evil as regards education than this matter of payment by results. When we hear so much said about payment by results, I should like to read some figures to the Committee dealing with individual fixed payments, or general payments, as compared with individual payments on results. Take the infant schools and classes. The average attendance was 995,867, and the amount of the payment last year was 14*s.* 8½*d.* year head. No part of that grant can be said to have depended upon individual passes. Three-fifths of it was absolutely fixed, subject to the fulfilment of certain conditions, and the remainder depended on the general character of the work done, giving the teachers full freedom as regards choice of method. Then take the schools for the older children—the amount of the average attendance of the children was 2,464,571, and the payment per head was 17*s.* 9¾*d.* Then, again, the fixed payment was 4*s.* 6*d.*, the payment for general excellence and class teaching 5*s.* 11*d.*, as against 7*s* 4¾*d.* for individual examination payments. If we take the total for the infant schools we should have £441,684 of a fixed grant, and £290,678 as a general grant; and in the case of the older children, the fixed grant was £559,433, the general payment £730,234, and the individual £905,576. I think it is only fair to put these figures before the Committee, and in so doing it should be understood that I do not wish to enter into a preliminary discussion as to the good or evil of the present system. It is one of the most difficult and complicated questions we shall have to consider in the future, and it will have an enormous result as affecting our school system. My task is now well nigh over. I am more than grateful to the Committee for having paid such close attention to my remarks. It is impossible for anyone holding the responsible position which I have the honour to hold not to be anxious as regards the future of this great educational system of ours. The more closely we study the question, the more assured we shall become that the future of this country is inseparably connected with this educational movement. Perhaps, as regards the future, the most refreshing thing for us to contemplate is this, that amidst all the strife and din of Party the education question is free from Party taint; and I trust that, whatever our future contests may be upon this question, they will not be contests of Party, but contests between men who think only of what is good for the future of the State and for the thorough and good education of our children.

Mr. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside): I rise with great pleasure to re-echo the sentiments which have just been uttered by my right hon. Friend the Vice President of the Council. I am sure we are all glad to congratulate him for the interesting statement he has placed before the Committee to-day, and for the record of continuous progress under the Education Acts—a progress which, I think, in its beneficial effects has been beyond the result of any other legislation that has ever been passed by the House of Commons in the present century. Reference has also been made to the Royal Commission, now sitting, and the right hon. Gentleman, in his opening remarks, made an apology for trespassing on their functions. I am bound to say that there was no necessity for that apology, because I do not think that in the statement which the right hon. Gentleman made the other night he trespassed in the least degree upon their functions. He was strictly performing his duty as Vice President of the Council in placing before us every question that affects the education of the country. I am not one of those who expect much from the Royal Commission. It is a case, I think, where they might say—"Blessed are they that expect nothing." But I did expect that some useful information would be got through the sitting of the Commission. We have had that already from some of the witnesses, and if we do not get a good majority Report we shall get a Report from some of the Members which will be useful in the future. That is one advantage from the sitting of the Commission which no one is more ready to recognize than I do. It comes from letting well alone. The appointment of the Commission had this good effect, and I am thankful for it, that it showed that the Code and the instructions which were adopted in 1883 have been continued from that time to the present with increasingly successful results. I am grateful to the right hon. Gentlemen who now sit on the Treasury Bench (Sir William Hart Dyke and Sir Henry Holland) for the continuity of their policy, and for having carried on the work on the lines on which the Government proceeded when I had the honour to occupy the position which they have occupied under the present Government. The right hon. Gentleman has stated that there has been no increase in the average attendance during the last year—that there has been a slight diminution. Since the passing of the Act of 1876, with the exception of the first quarter of that year, the attendance has steadily increased. It has risen, I believe, from 76·3 per cent to 85 per cent, and I am glad to find that the Committee of Council recognize the main factors in that success. They attribute it mainly to the Act of 1880—the Act which prescribed the Standards. What we really need now is an extension of that Act. We want a minimum Standard, and that the Standards, when fixed, shall apply to the whole country. The right hon. Gentleman has attributed the arrest of the progress in average attendance to the severe winter. That may, no doubt, have had something to do with it; but the depression of trade and agriculture and the difficulty of paying fees had probably still more and were the principal factor in the question. There are two difficulties in the way of raising the average attendance, and one of them is that throughout England and Wales an authority is established which is in the main indifferent to education—the Boards of Guardians. School attendance committees ought to be equal to the school boards; but they are not in general very earnest about this question of enforcing attendance. The fact is, that there are not sufficient school attendance officers, and the magistrates themselves do not sympathize with the work, and do not enforce it. Mr. Oliver, the Inspector for Lincolnshire, says, in the general Report of the Chief Inspector in 1886, in regard to the Eastern Division—

> "With some two or three exceptions managers rely altogether on the local authority to secure attendance. The administration of the compulsory clauses by local bodies is very unsatisfactory, speaking generally. School boards and attendance committees are, in too many cases, composed of persons whose (supposed) interests are opposed to their duties. In some cases their members are themselves the chief offenders against the Act within their district. In very many instances they are ignorant of their duties, or wilfully neglect them. Much of the blame for the (admitted) unsatisfactory administration of the clauses is thrown upon the magistrates, not altogether without reason."

Mr. Davies says the same thing. He says—

> "The attendance is the weakest point in my schools. Without being able to charge any of the boards or attendance committees with culpable negligence, yet I cannot but feel that the attendance officer's work is in most cases poorly done. He is generally too much connected with his surroundings to do his duty well. I quote a case I had to take notice of. At a school in the Sleaford Union the mistress and clergyman complained loudly of the uselessness of the school attendance committee, saying that the attendance officer had not been once to the school in the past school year. They replied, 'Yes; but that the mistress had arranged with the officer that he need not come unless she sent for him;' and the committee seemed to think this a good arrangement."

Mr. Wilson says—

> "It is a very common practice here for the by-laws to allow children to be absent most or all of the summer (if qualified for half-time), and only to enforce their attendance the rest of the year. I have lessened the evil by getting 250 attendances instead of 150 in many cases. One Union has abolished half-time. The only half-time recognized should be some regular system of alternate days or weeks, and I would grant total exemption to no child under 13. The present system of education in country districts is very largely a waste of public money, as the children leave about 11 years old, and forget all again."

A similar statement runs all through the reports from the rural districts, and, indeed, in some of the reports from Wales the same statement is made. What is the remedy for the present state of things? If we are not to have a school board in every rural parish, we ought to have some independent educational authority, separate from the Boards of Guardians. There never was anything worse for education in this country than to have put the education in the non-school board districts into the hands of the Boards of Guardians. The evil effect produced by the system has been referred to by the right hon. Gentleman himself. There is no power to remit or to pay fees on behalf of poor parents, except through Boards of Guardians; and in times of distress, the parents, whether poor agricultural labourers or town artizans, object to go before the Boards of Guardians to plead to be relieved from the payment of 2*d.* or 2½*d.* a-week, or to have the amount paid for them. Until you get rid of that evil, you will have constant complaints as to the average attendance. In London the average attendance is 82 per cent, or 6 per cent above the average attendance of England; but the average for England is brought down enormously by the low attendance of the agricultural districts; 82 per cent is the average in London, and in many of the large towns it is even more than that. Then what must be the average in the rural districts, where compulsory attendance is not enforced? Mr. Wilson reports that much of the money spent on education in the rural districts is absolutely wasted, because the children leave school at so early an age that they forget everything they have learnt. We must do what the Scotch have done. We must have a minimum Standard, whether in the towns or in the rural districts. Why should there be a difference in the case of a peasant's child on one side of the Border and not on the other? Why should the Standard on one side of the Border be never less than the 5th; whereas in England it is constantly the 4th, and I am afraid there are some cases in which it is as low as the 3rd? And, be it remembered, I am speaking of full time, and not of half time. My right hon. Friend referred to Bradford; but in Bradford they have been screwed up to half time. Some of our low Standards refer to full time. I have been told recently by the manager of one of the best rural schools in England—the Woodside School—that the Fourth Standard is the Standard of full time, and that the Guardians are unwilling to continue payment when the children have passed the Standard for full time. The truth is that the children are are taken from school altogether too young to retain the education they obtained in the rural schools. I am glad, however, to see that in some cases the progress has been very marvellous, and the growth in the percentage of children passing the Standards is the most satisfactory feature in the Report of the Education Department. There is a table on page 10 of the Report which the Committee of Council has presented to us which shows some very remarkable results. Whereas, in 1872, there were only 36,800 children presented in Standard V., which was the present Standard IV., the number presented last year was 265,000, the number presented in Standard VI. in 1872 was only 15,000, last year it was 103,000; and while in 1872 in ex-Standard VI. and Standard VII. there were none presented, last year the number presented was 25,000. All this is a satisfactory proof of the progress we have a right to expect and to ask for. The Estimates entitle the country to look for progress. What I want to point out is that our large expenditure is in a very great measure defeated by the want of further legislation in the direction of raising the Standards, and of better machinery for compelling the attendance of the children in schools. The right hon. Gentleman spoke of the percentage of schools which have passed as "fair," "below fair," "good," and "excellent." I was glad to see the "good" and "excellent" increasing; but when the right hon. Gentleman spoke of "fair" and "below fair" as moderate schools, I could not agree with him. So far from being moderate, such schools which can only be called "fair" and "below fair" are bad schools; we ought not to have them; they are a discredit to us. The main cause is one which I shall refer to shortly. I have been advocating the raising of the Standards. I should like the right hon. Gentleman to consider the advantages which the Scotch have obtained from raising their Standards. He will find it an interesting study. If we turn to the percentage of children who pass in the high Standards in Scotland, it will be found that more than 7 per cent above 13 years of age are in attendance in Scotland, while only about 3½ per cent of the children are in attendance in England. Then take the subjects in which the Scotch children are passing. I should like the Committee to hear two or three figures which show the quality of the education in Scotland as against our own. The scholars examined in Latin last year in Scotland were 7,445. As the population of Scotland is less than one-sixth of that of England, we ought, if we are to hold our ground as compared with the Scotch, to have 44,000 examined in Latin in England; but the number was only 342, and I believe they were nothing but pupil teachers. And what were the number examined in French in Scotland? I think we are all agreed that French should be taught in our elementary schools to the higher classes. The time will come—it ought to have come now—when we shall make one foreign language obligatory in our schools. My right hon. Friend sent Mr. Matthew Arnold to Germany to inquire what they were teaching there. He went to Hamburg, and he found that every child in an elementary school at Hamburg was taught English. In Scotland last year 5,154 children were examined in French. Multiplied by six, we ought to have had 30,000 examined; but we passed only just about as many as the Scotch, so that for every child in England who learns French at an elementary school six are taught in Scotland. The real reason is that the children are kept longer at school. I would appeal to the hon. Gentleman opposite who represents the London School Board (Sir Richard Temple) what hope he can have of success in the London School Board if he cannot secure a full-time attendance. It simply means a vast expenditure with miserable results. It is high time that a change should be made. With regard to the remission of fees, I think that the time has come when we can no longer leave that matter to be dealt with by the Guardians. It is my opinion that unless we establish a certain number of free schools in every town, we shall have free education altogether forced upon us. I, for one, should rejoice if that were so. I have come to the conclusion that it would be the best way of promoting good education in England; that it would be most satisfactory in its results, and that it would do more to elevate our population than we are now doing. What are we doing now? While we are raising them on the one hand by giving them instruction, we are degrading them on the other by bringing them into contact with all the machinery of pauperism. If a man or woman once breaks through that sense of independence, and that honourable spirit which the English people possess, which refuses them to go to the Board of Guardians for relief for the mere sake of the education of their children, depend upon it they will soon go for something more. They will have got rid of the first sense of shame and the first feeling of reluctance; you will have broken down their spirit of independence, and instead of going for 2*d.* a week they will go for 3*s.*, and you will find that you have been adopting means for increasing pauperism. I trust that as speedily as possible we shall establish some free schools. I think that in London there is abundant scope for them, and also in every large town, and I am afraid everywhere. If we do not soon adopt some method of establishing free schools I am afraid we shall be bringing the people into a contact with pauperism from which it will be difficult to free them altogether hereafter. I have drawn a comparison between Scotland and this country in regard to the higher subjects and the larger attendance in the Scotch schools. It is not that the Scotch people are making better progress than we are. I find on examination that the ratio of progress is greater in England than it has been in Scotland, and I believe that our English children pass a more strict test and a more severe examination than the Scotch children do. It is, however, a remarkable fact that, whereas each child in this country only earns 17*s.* 2*d.* per annum, the Scotch children earn 18*s.* 7*d.* per head. I am well aware that our fellow-countrymen and the Scotch Representatives are fully alive to these facts, and as an indication of progress it may be a matter for rejoicing; it is due very likely to the higher subjects which are taught in Scotland, and the fact that the children there remain longer at school. It is, nevertheless, true that every Scotch child last year drew 1*s.* 6*d.* per head more for education than an English child. There is another point which the right hon. Gentleman did not refer to, and he will, perhaps, excuse me if I draw his attention to it. It is a matter referred to in the Report before us as to the relative progress of the Board and voluntary schools. I remember when I went to the Education Department in 1880, the grants paid to the voluntary schools were in excess of those paid to the Board schools. Since then the board schools have been gradually creeping on improving the character of their instruction, while the voluntary schools, as compared with the board schools, have been falling back. It is a fact, according to this Report, that the children in the voluntary schools are now earning one shilling per head less than the children in the Board schools. I am making no charge against the voluntary schools. I know there are many voluntary schools which are quite as good as the board schools. I know some voluntary schools which are among the very best schools in the Kingdom; but that only proves how many there must be that are very bad, seeing that they have fallen so much below the earning rate of the board schools. Let me ask the Committee to consider what that sum of 1*s.* per head represents. It means 2*s.* in some instances, and where a voluntary school is earning 2*s.* per head less than a board school it means that the voluntary school is a far inferior school for a child as compared with the board school. What is the cause of this? I believe it is that we want better teachers and a better staff in all of our schools. But the voluntary schools are specially starved for want of stuff. Too much reliance is placed in voluntary schools upon pupil teachers, and pupil teachers are about the worst device we can resort to for conducting voluntary schools. I hope to live to see the time when there will not be such a thing as a pupil teacher in England, which is, I believe, the only country in Europe where such a thing is to be found. It is simply a device to save expense, and the expense is saved at the cost of the children and their school life. I trust the time will come when we shall get rid of the pupil teacher altogether. The right hon. Gentleman spoke of drawing. Now, the Drawing Minute was copied strictly from the recommendations of the Commission on Technical Education. The Department said—"We will bring it within the 17*s.* 6*d.* limit, and the grant will be more easily earned if we include drawing in it." What was the result? The right hon. Gentleman has found it necessary to call in the aid of the Science and Art Department without troubling the Privy Council upon the matter. I am glad of that. I have always advocated the propriety of abolishing the 17*s.* 6*d.* limit, and I should be very glad to see it go altogether. I am glad to say in the presence of the hon. Member for the University of Oxford (Mr. J. G. Talbot) that that is one of the few things I desire to see brought about in connection with education. We ought to get rid of the 17*s.* 6*d.* limit. Let the schools earn what they can, but do not put a limit upon them. Offer them certain advantages on condition of their giving certain instruction. There is only one way in which I feel that drawing can ever be made successful, and that is by making it obligatory. You must put it exactly on the same footing as you put reading, writing, and arithmetic. It must be made compulsory. I know it is said that this will involve a considerable outlay; but when you are giving £3,500,000 in grants, and £3,500,000 upon school boards and others, or a sum of £7,000,000 on the education of your children, what is the use of leaving out so essential a branch of technical education as drawing, which is the language of industrial art, so to speak, for the sake of saving £50,000 a-year? Therefore, I trust the right hon. Gentleman will not rest satisfied until he has made drawing obligatory. No doubt there are a great number of teachers who cannot teach drawing properly. They have never been taught themselves; but that question opens a large field which I do not wish to enter into at any length. I should like to see the cost of training teachers more than doubled; because to set up a child of 13 or 14 years of age as a monitor is about as preposterous a device as ever entered into the mind of man. When the average of age was five years, the monitor system was better than nothing; but as matters now stand, it is wasteful and expensive to the last degree. I am glad of one thing, and that is for the grant for cookery in night schools, and I cannot see why both cooking and drawing should not be taught in the night schools as well as the day schools, and a separate grant made for them. I believe that would be an immense gain. Then I would make another suggestion to the right hon. Gentleman—namely, that we should drop a great deal of the inspection and individual examination up to the Third Standard; this, I think, would effect a considerable saving by diminishing the waste of labour and the expenditure on individual examination as now carried out. I have only one or two more remarks to make. I am strongly of opinion that we must, if we are to make our education thorough, adopt the Continental continuation system. A great deal might be done in this way by night schools, and I should not object, nor do I think anyone else would object, to the system being made compulsory—that is to say, I do not think there would be any objection in the country to its being made compulsory—say, up to the age of 14 years. In Switzerland, it is compulsory up to the age of 16; in Germany to 17; but we may take it that children who pass at an early age to labour should obtain two or three nights a-week at continuation schools, until such time as they pass the higher Standards, and in that way they would get both manual instruction and a groundwork of technical education. The right hon. Gentleman has referred to what has been done to the poor hungry children. The Committee cannot conceive the enormous amount of good that can be done in this way by the smallest possible expenditure of money. I remember some years ago there were two good men in this House, one of whom said to me—"I will give £100 a-year to start with," and another said—"I will give you £50." I drew from them just what was necessary to feed the children and pay for the necessary work in connection with it, and since that time there has risen up in London and throughout the country dinner associations which are feeding many thousands of children. I have heard of one case where more than 10,000 children get every day one comfortable meal, and the whole cost of that comes to something under £600 for the year. I cannot conceive a more excellent work. Why, in Birmingham they are feeding children at one halfpenny per head per day, and one gentleman has been able to supply farthing dinners. This only shows what the cheapening of food has done in this country. It was found that the penny dinners were more than many of the poor children could digest, and that a halfpenny dinner was quite enough to sustain and satisfy a child; and now farthing dinners are being supplied on a large scale. This is glorious work. I remember one case at Lucerne in which I was greatly interested; I was told, although the schools there are free from top to bottom, that much work remained to be done by the benevolent. They had a Scholars' Aid Society, and although the education was free, 25 per cent of the children were helped with food and boots and other necessaries to enable them to go to school. That proves that a State system does not put a stop to private benevolence, but, on the contrary, has a tendency to increase it.

SIR RICHARD TEMPLE (Worcester, Evesham): I shall not attempt to detain the Committee by travelling over the wide field which has been traversed by the two right hon. Gentlemen who have preceded me, nor shall I endeavour to imitate their good example by entering on any technical discussion. I shall endeavour to keep strictly to the Vote before the Committee. This is a Vote for what are called grants-in-aid and subsidies to Board schools and voluntary schools throughout the country. Now, the sum allotted to Board schools and other schools of an elementary character amounts in all to £3,500,000 sterling, or more than three-fifths of the total amount allotted in England to education generally. I propose to consider whether this Vote for subsidies to schools—this sum of over £3,000,000 sterling out of the £3,500,000 allotted to elementary education—is applied as well as it might be, and whether the money is made to go as far as it might go for the moral, intellectual, and physical training of the rising generation of the poorer classes in this country. I shall not attempt to parade before the Committee any knowledge drawn from Blue Books or Statistical Bureaux; what I shall say is derived from personal knowledge, derived, in my capacity as Vice-Chairman of the School Board for London, from repeated visits to those parts of London which are, perhaps, but little visited, and where the work is actually carried on amongst the humbler classes. I come now to the question—"Are these sums of money applied to the best possible purpose?" The Department, of course, go on a system of payment by results; and how is that system tested? By inspection and examination. What is the character of that examination and inspection? It is partly statistical and partly general, and in connection with what I am about to say I have derived some encouragement from what has fallen from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Brightside Division of Sheffield (Mr. Mundella) upon this very subject. I am obliged to confess that, in my opinion, the test has hitherto been too much of a statistical and too little of a general character; and if the Committee will permit me, I will show what I mean by that. Now, I fear we must confess that in respect of the actual knowledge which we communicate to children from the age of five to that of 10, or at the outside 12, in our elementary schools, most of it will be speedily forgotten when the children enter on the course of active existence, and that much of it must be evaporated in the hurry-scurry, the rush and crush of workaday life. But while these things are forgotten, will nothing remain? Yes, surely; and that is the memory of the moral character and formation of the system through which they have passed, and which they never can forget. It is our object not only to impart the rudiments of instruction to the rising generation of the humbler classes, but more particularly to form their character and improve their manners, and to show them how to form happy homes for themselves, so that it may be truly said of our system—*emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros.* Now we are bound to consider the physical condition of children as well as their education, for the two are connected one with the other. We must look, I repeat, to the manners of the children; we must try to teach them by the example of their instructors to be kind, gentle, respectful, and considerate to all those around them. Surely it is consideration and thoughtfulness for others which constitutes the standard of nature's gentleman. We must try also to make the children cheerful. These children come largely from unhappy, troubled, and anxious homes, having known what is the effect of *res augusta domi*; then let them learn in our class-rooms something of the gentleness of life, and the brighter side of existence. Yet let us give them discipline; let us see that those who are brought up in such homes shall be taught to obey and be disciplined to do everything to order, and to imbibe that system which forms so large a part of the business of life. Then we should see to the comfort of our school buildings—that these should be capacious, commodious, and well-ventilated, in order that they may form the best possible contrast to the squalid and, in some parts of London, the fœtid homes —owing to insanitary conditions—from which these poor children come. If we wish to render the interior bright, there should be paintings on the walls, object lessons, and maps and charts; we should also see that there is manual exercise, and especially musical instruction, which tends more than any other art to soften and refine the manners. I connect these subjects most closely with education, because I say that we have heretofore devoted to these considerations too little regard, and have regarded too much the statistical test of examination. Although the money we vote to-day is much better applied than it used to be, still much remains to be done; and, therefore, I urge these considerations upon the Committee in order that in future we may have a better test of the efficiency of our educational system. If grants in aid of this system, amounting to the large sum of £3,000,000 and upwards, are to be given entirely on examination, these cardinal principles are lost sight of, whereas I submit the carrying out of these principles should be tested by inspection, and that more regard should be paid to these general results. It is said that these things cannot be the subject of inspection: I venture to assure the Committee, on actual experience, that they can. You may say that if the Inspector is to make his Report on general conditions, the manager may make things look nice on the day of inspection. But, Sir, that cannot be done; it is impossible for a schoolmaster, at the last moment, to make children, who have been sulky and inattentive on all other days, look bright and cheerful on the examination day. If the schoolhouse and its playground is well cared for and furnished, I say that you can be quite certain that on the day of inspection the appearance of the children—their faces, their manner, their oral delivery, their external neatness—may be taken as a sample of the average condition of the school. No doubt, it is possible to polish up a little and make things look their best; but I submit it is impossible to make a school look well on the day of inspection if it has been, up to that day, neglected. I can hardly agree with my right hon. Friend the Member for the Brightside Division of Sheffield, if I understand him correctly, as to our having too much inspection. I submit, with regard to the large area in London, that it is impossible to obtain a proper standard of efficiency unless we have proper inspection. [Mr. MUNDELLA: I spoke of individual examinations.] Then, I hope I may claim the support of the right hon. Gentleman for what I say. I submit that the schools can be tested in respect of these conditions. If the Government Inspectors cannot do it, I say that the School Board Inspectors can. I think I have made good my proposition—that the money we are asked to vote to-day is, on the whole, well expended—better expended than it used to be — but still, not so well expended as it might be; and why? Because we have yet much to do before we can establish in the School Board system, and in the Education Department of the Government, the principle that, although grants in aid should depend largely on the results of examination, they should also partly depend on the general character of the schools reported on, not by Her Majesty's Inspectors alone, but also by the Inspectors of the School Board itself. Now, this brings me to a topic touched upon by the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Council, and that is the question as to whether anything can be properly done, and, if so, how much, in the way of feeding the children, a subject which has been twice touched upon by preceding speakers. Now, I entreat the Committee not to press the School Board too hard on this point, because, as the Committee will perceive, this is a thing which must be worked out gradually. I ask the Committee to consider the effect of an obligatory system upon public opinion.

THE CHAIRMAN: I would point out to the hon. Baronet that although it is quite pertinent to the Vote to glance at the means of increasing the efficiency of elementary schools, it is not a subject which can be discussed in detail on this Estimate.

SIR RICHARD TEMPLE: Then, Sir, I will not discuss it any further. I hope, however, after what has been said by the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Mundella), that I may be permitted to point out what has been done in London regarding the physical condition of the children in the Board schools.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member should do so very briefly.

SIR RICHARD TEMPLE: Yes; it will be done in miniature. Then, I would like to explain that if we cannot give any formal instructions to the teachers, we have, nevertheless, endeavoured to make them understand what is their duty in this respect. We do not undertake, as a Board, to provide penny dinners for the children; but we have, of course, all manner of private organizations. We help to give, or cause to be given, penny or halfpenny dinners to thousands and tens of thousands of children; and I may say that, in our case, the numbers that were mentioned by the right hon. Gentleman opposite —some 10,000—may be multiplied by four or five to give an idea of those who are daily provided for. We have also an excellent establishment called the Poor Children's Aid Society; we have ladies and gentlemen of position and benevolence in the neighbourhood of every Board school who endeavour to provide something for the necessitous children. I have heard it said that the School Board should not enforce the attendance of children who are in a weak, depressed, or half-starving condition; but, on the contrary, we contend that these are the very children whom we ought to get at, because when they are at school their state is observed day by day, and is appreciated and sympathized with, and some remedy, either directly or indirectly, is almost always sure to be found for it. There are exceptions to the contrary, no doubt; but I am confident that such children do not long escape attention, and that it is not long before some remedy is applied in their case. I hope in saying this I am not transgressing your ruling, Mr. Chairman; but I have thought it necessary to say something on the subject after what has fallen from the Vice President of the Council and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Brightside Division of Sheffield. Then I should like to say just one word with regard to evening classes. I am bound to say that I could not undertake to propose that the attendance at these classes should be made compulsory; because the rule would apply to children beyond the age of 12, and that, of course, would involve not only an increase of local rates, but would also lead to an increase of public expenditure. On the other hand, we are endeavouring by direct or indirect means to secure such attendance as we can at evening classes, because we have in them continuation classes in the best sense, and we are through them enabled to insure that the children preserve some remnant of the knowledge they have acquired as day scholars. Then, with regard to the subject of pensions, which has been alluded to by the Vice President, I maintain that this pension question has proceeded but a very short distance as yet. A very few thousands of pounds have been put down; and although the Vice President of the Council has given us an account of how the pensions have arisen in a certain number of years, it is still only a matter of a few hundreds of individuals. If the profession of teacher is to be made a dignified and proper one, there must be, I submit, some regular system of pensions. Now, we cannot expect that this Committee will vote the money for the purpose, and I apprehend that the ratepayers will not like the money to come from the rates; but pensions must be found somehow or other. There is, however, the very best possible means for the establishment of such a system in compulsory assurance. Let the teachers in all Board schools and voluntary schools submit to a deduction from their salaries, and from these deductions let funds be formed for the purpose.

THE CHAIRMAN: I would point out to the hon. Baronet that this is certainly going beyond the Question before the Committee.

SIR RICHARD TEMPLE: Then, Sir, perhaps I may be allowed to make a few remarks on the subject of fees, because that is one which affects the finances of the Education Department. We are endeavouring in London to secure a better collection of fees than before; to insure that there shall be no arrears; that in the case of parents who can pay they shall be enforced; and that the obligation shall only be carried out in respect of those parents who are able to pay. But I cannot hold out any hope that we could assent to the principle that there should be free schools without any fees whatever—schools in which education would be entirely defrayed either at the expense of the Votes in this Committee, or at the expense of the local rates. With regard to technical education I have nothing to say on this occasion, having said my say on a former occasion, except to assure the Committee that our feeble efforts in this direction in London do not amount to much. I am glad to hear the favourable testimony which has been given with regard to instruction in cookery, and I hope that money will always be granted to young women to qualify in that most necessary art. One word, before I conclude, with regard to voluntary schools. It was the principle of the Elementary Education Act that the School Board system should supplement and not supersede the voluntary system. Now, the great complaint is that that system has, and does still, interfere with the voluntary system. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sheffield has pointed out that, while the Board schools are moving forwards, the voluntary schools are sliding back. The cause of that is not that there is any want of support for the voluntary schools; it is owing to the severe competition of the School Board. Now, that does affect this Vote particularly. If in any part of London a Board school is set up where voluntary schools have before done, or could be got to do, the work, there is so much loss to the poorer classes of London, because the Board school set up in the locality might, with more advantage, have been set up elsewhere. The voluntary school would furnish pupils that would win grants from the Education Department, and grants would also be won from the Board school set up, say, in the East of London. I cannot promise that money would be actually saved in this Vote by the voluntary schools being left to do the work; but then the extra money would be won by competition by additional students, and I think Parliament would not grudge the extra amount, least of all for such objects as those advocated by the right hon. Gentleman. With regard to attendance, I assure the Committee that it is almost impossible to escape the vigilance of our Board. We have Inspectors, Visitors, and subordinate officers who work day and night all over this Metropolis; and I ask the Committee to remember that, although we have not more than 80 per cent in attendance at any one moment, yet with regard to the remaining 20 per cent it is to be believed that they are in school at other times. I venture to say that there is hardly a case to be found of a boy or girl who does not, on some day or other, attend school. I have now to thank you, Mr. Chairman and the Committee, for allowing me to state what appears to me to be a very important argument with regard to the future of elementary education in this country, and for allowing me, from personal knowledge, to express the conviction that to provide for that future elementary education is one of the most important duties which this House can possibly perform. It is this education which shall make the rising generation a wise and understanding people, and which shall prevent the growth of Socialism and the kindred evils that threaten the State; it is this education that will enable the humbler classes to enjoy the institutions of their country, and hand these blessings down to those who shall come after.

Sir JOHN LUBBOCK (London University): We find that out of the whole number of elementary schools in this country there are only 370 which present any children for examination in history, and only 43 who present them in elementary science. The present class subjects are, as we know, history, geography, English and elementary science, but under the present Code only two class subjects can be taken, and one of these must be English. Of course, the great majority of the schools take geography for one class subject, and the result has been that elementary science cannot be said to be taken at all and that history is very much neglected. I doubt whether it is desirable to carry instruction in grammar so far as it is demanded under the Code. That is my individual opinion; but I am glad to find it is shared by hon. Gentlemen opposite. But surely we may trust to the School Board to select the subject in which they would submit children for examination. I think in this matter I shall have the sympathy of the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Council (Sir William Hart Dyke) in the matter of manual instruction, because it will be a natural introduction to be afforded by the Technical Instruction Bill. If you will allow a latitude to School Board Committees to exercise their discretion in this matter, I venture to think that a great many would adopt some system of manual instruction, and thus lead up to the technical instruction proposed by the Bill before the House. I do not express that opinion without having reason for it, because I find in one instance that on the 19th May last, on the Motion of the Rev. Mr. Lawrence, a Resolution was carried—

> "That in the opinion of the Board it is necessary to introduce into the schools some regular system of manual training."

And I believe that many school boards in the country hold similar opinions. And this would probably be popular with the masters themselves, because 80 elementary teachers have already accepted the offer of the City and Guilds of London Institute to give them instruction in the use of tools, and that number will probably be exceeded. If, therefore, my right hon. Friend will modify the Code in the manner suggested, I think we may make a tentative beginning in the direction indicated and see what can be effected. But, of course, nothing can be done if the Code be allowed to remain as it is at present. Some will, no doubt, think we can do nothing in technical instruction without a large amount of machinery; but if hon. Members look at the books which have been lately published, they will see how much may be learnt by these means and that a good and thorough groundwork in the elementary phenomena of Nature with which we are surrounded may be given at a very small expenditure. As we keep our children at school up to 10 and 11 years of age—and I hope it will be longer in the future—surely it is not a satisfactory state of things that we should send them out into the world without knowing something of the history of their country and elementary science. Mr. Matthew Arnold found that in Germany the subjects are twice as numerous as in England, and the satisfactory working of the Hamburg schools he believed was due to the variety of subjects which made instruction interesting to the children. There is, I think, very little doubt that unless we make education interesting the children will forget what they have learnt when they have left the schools. And, on the other hand, if we succeed in making it interesting it will be their object to continue it in after life. Then we need not refer to foreign countries alone as to the effect of manual instruction, because we have a certain amount of evidence bearing upon the question in connection with the half-timers. The Commissioners say that although these children receive less than 14 hours of instruction a week, their percentage of passes is higher than the average in the case of children receiving double that amount of schooling throughont the country; and I am convinced that the introduction into the schools of manual instruction, in the sense of teaching the children to use their own hands, will be of great advantage in itself to the children, and have a beneficial effect on others also. We have excellent school boards over a great part of the country, and I ask if it is not absurd that we should lay down such minute guidance as exists at present? Ought we not to trust to them to select subjects for themselves? Even if we were certain that we had got hold of the best system as a whole, I think we ought not to attempt to enforce it throughout the country. The needs of localities vary; and, moreover, there will be always some masters capable of teaching one subject better than another, and we ought to allow a certain amount of latitude in this respect. My right hon. Friend will, perhaps, tell me that we have a Royal Commission now sitting; but we have seen this year a considerable number of Amendments introduced into the Code this year, and although I can understand that there may be an objection to demand more of the schools, or to introduce any obligatory change during the sitting of the Commission, still the suggestion I venture to throw out is merely to allow a certain latitude of action to managers; and I cannot think that the fact of the Commission being in existence can be any reason whatever against giving the latitude I ask for. But my right hon. Friend may think it, perhaps, well to refer to the Commission. It may be that some time will elapse before they report upon the intricate and difficult questions referred to them; but my right hon. Friend might at least obtain from them an indication of their views on this subject. I trust my right hon. Friend will take an interest in the matter, and, if possible, allow to the school boards or committees power to select for themselves amongst the class subjects, and that provision should be made for manual instruction in the schools.

CAPTAIN HEATHCOTE (Staffordshire, N.W.): I wish to ask the attention of the Committee to one or two practical points which have come within my own observation during the period in which I have given attention to this subject. In the first place, with regard to the remission of fees, I agree with the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Council that it is almost impossible to get rid of the pauperizing atmosphere which, in the minds of the poorer classes, always surrounds the office of Board of Guardians. It would not be in Order for me to foreshadow what might occur next Session; but I may, perhaps, say that I do not think any machinery that now exists would be a suitable substitute for the Boards of Guardians in this matter. As we have to go on as at present until a suitable authority is constituted, I think it worth while to consider whether we cannot mitigate some of the inconveniences or evils which exist. There is one difficulty that presents itself in connection with the Boards of Guardians—namely, that parents have to make applications to them at fixed intervals for the purpose of getting a remission of fees. In my own district, in order to obtain remission of the fees, some parents have to make journeys of several miles in order to wait on the Board of Guardians. Now, I venture to think it would not be difficult for the Guardians in some way or other to resolve themselves into Excuse Committees to meet at the schools once a fortnight, or monthly, to hear applications for the remission of fees. I do not think it would be necessary to have more than one or two Guardians present on each occasion. These Committees in case of need could refer any cases which came before them to the Board of Guardians, and ask that their decision should be ratified. I think that, at any rate, this plan would get rid of the difficulty as to the pauperizing nature of the atmosphere which surrounds the application to the Board of Guardians. I am sure that parents would much rather go to the school house and see some of the Guardians there than to the Union, and I venture to suggest this plan as being worth the consideration of the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Council. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Brightside Division of Sheffield (Mr. Mundella) has deprecated individual examination until Standard III. is passed. It is only with the greatest diffidence that I venture to express an opinion contrary to that of such an old educational hand as the right hon. Gentleman. I believe the right hon. Gentleman objected to individual examination in the particular stages on the ground that abolishing examination would effect a saving of labour and expense. No doubt, to a certain extent, that might be so, although, in my opinion, it would be carried out at the cost of the children themselves. I do not think there is any educational agency of such value as examination. I think examinations interest and attract children to the acquirement of knowledge in a way which the ordinary dull school life does not; and I think a large school board with which I was for some time connected owed much of its success to a very efficient monthly examination which we caused to be held in the schools. Those examinations were conducted on this principle—that they should be 10 per cent more difficult than the annual examination, and the result of them was that the children found the examination papers set by the Inspectors very much easier than they were accustomed to, and they therefore went to them with a confidence which greatly contributed to their success.

Mr. MUNDELLA: Were they individual or class examinations?

Captain HEATHCOTE: I do not quite follow the right hon. Gentleman. The children were examined individually in their classes.

Mr. MUNDELLA: I hope it will not be supposed that I want to abolish inspection or examination of children in classes. I would continue that, of course, for the purpose of promoting them to higher classes. I do not think the hon. and gallant Gentleman is quite correct in saying that the children went through 12 examinations in the year; but if so I should be very sorry for them.

Captain HEATHCOTE: Each class was examined four times annually individually. However, having pointed out that in my opinion the examinations should be as frequent as possible, I will not pursue that subject any further. I wish to call attention to what seems to be the unfair mode of dispensing the merit grant. This in different districts seems to vary very greatly; there seems to be a wide difference between the meaning given to the instructions as between one district and another. I find, for instance, that in Bedfordshire the "excellent" class is represented by 7·55; in Berkshire by 30·86; at Brighton 19·25; and Preston 32·18. Now, I cannot suppose that the difference of average intelligence between Bedfordshire and Berkshire is so enormous as these figures indicate, and I am, therefore, forced to the conclusion that the interpretation placed by the different Inspectors upon the instructions varies considerably. I venture to think that three classes does not give the Inspectors a fair chance, and I think they should have greater latitude, because it is not possible for an Inspector always to say that the children in a school belong to one of three classes. My opinion is, then, that these classes should be sub-divided into plus excellent, excellent, and minus excellent, at 3*s.*, 2*s.* 8*d.*, and 2*s.* 4*d.* respectively. I think it is obviously unfair that a school which the Inspector may think not quite "excellent" should not get something more than a school which only just receives the next lower degree in the scale. I would, therefore, ask the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Council to consider how far it may be possible to go in the direction of making the classification more elastic, and I venture to think more fair.

Mr. WOODALL (Hanley): I imagine that we could hardly spend a Saturday afternoon more profitably and pleasantly than in the manner in which we have spent this. I think I may venture to offer my congratulations to the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Council on the admirable manner in which he has rendered his statement to the House, and, I may also venture to say, for his strongly sympathetic feeling which he has manifested. I mention this because we must all feel it to be particularly satisfactory that, with the growth of this great educational work, there is a practical agreement between both political Parties that our only aim ought to be to so direct the administration of affairs as to render the greatest service to the country for the money voted by Parliament. I venture to address the House for a few moments for the purpose, in the first instance, of acknowledging, on behalf of my Colleagues with whom I have had the honour of serving on the Royal Commission on Technical Instruction, the kind and appreciative manner in which the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President referred to our work and our Report. He quoted particularly that passage in the Report in which the Commissioners speak of the peculiar contrast presented between the method of giving instruction in drawing in our own country, as compared with that of our competitors on the Continent. I was particularly glad that he also quoted the passage from the recommendation of the Commissioners in a sense as if he concurred with it—that passage in which we strongly and unanimously recommend that the importance of drawing should be recognized to the extent that it should be made as obligatory in our elementary schools as the teaching of writing itself. My right hon. Friend the Member for the Brightside Division of Sheffield (Mr. Mundella), in his references to the Report of Mr. Matthew Arnold, spoke of that gentleman's commendations of the teaching in the schools of Hamburg, and I observe that so far is the importance of drawing recognized in that town, that the teaching of it precedes the teaching of wrting. All we have asked is that it should be made coincident with it, and that one should be made—as we believe it could be—a help to the other. Now, the Committee will not require that I should dwell at any length upon the importance of a thing which is conceded in the abstract, though not generally realized in practice. But so much is said just now about the importance of mechanical and technical training of all kinds that it cannot be too often repeated that "good, efficient, industrial drawing," as my right hon. Friend has always called it, is a very essential foundation to every kind of specialized manual training. But in the Continental schools, and especially in the schools of Paris and France generally, there is practised a very excellent and very general method of making young hands skilful by teaching modelling, and it would be a great thing gained if Parliament realized, in its efforts to give the country more facilities for technical instruction, that good sound drawing and modelling, taught by some means in the elementary schools, will be a most valuable foundation for any applied teaching of that kind. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Brightside Division of Sheffield, during his term of Office, did very great service by his endeavours to give effect to the recommendations of the Commissioners by encouraging and enjoining the teaching of drawing in the day schools. We have heard to-day many explanations which go to show how it came about that that experiment was so far a failure. We have realized the important influence of the 17*s.* 6*d.* maximum limit, and we all know that, under this system of payments by results, it is inevitable that our school managers and our school teachers should look to the business of grant earning rather than to the efficiency of the schools. But there is one other practical difficulty which stood in the way, and that was the extreme difficulty of finding in many schools capable teachers—teachers who were themselves instructed in drawing, and were able to give instruction intelligently in the methods of drawing to others. Another difficulty, which everyone who has been connected with school management must realize, is the fact that our time tables are already so full that it is very difficult, indeed, to find room for these other subjects, however important we may consider them to be. We are allowed—we have a minimum which is practically the maximum of two hours in the morning and two hours in the evening, or 20 hours' per week for all these secular subjects. We have heard a great deal in recent years—I am happy to think that the apprehension on the subject is nearly spent now; but we have heard a great deal about over-pressure, and about the evil of the particular work and occupation of the day schools. Well, again referring to the schools at Hamburg, we find that the number of hours in the lower Standards is 26; in the intermediate Standards 28, and in the higher Standards 32 hours per week, as against the 20 hours which is practically the limit in the English schools; and I think we must make up our minds that if these subjects are to be taught with anything like efficiency there must be some understanding that the number of hours devoted to the work will be considerably increased. Certainly in all the other schools on the Continent—and I imagine also in the schools of America —these hours are largely increased.

Mr. PICTON (Leicester): In the higher Standards?

Mr. WOODALL: Yes, in the higher Standards particularly. But, as I have shown in the case of Hamburg, even in the lower Standards six hours more are given than are allowed in the ordinary time tables of the English schools; but we have heard to-day that which seems to suggest that the solution of these differences will be found rather in the encouragement of supplementary evening classes than even in the extension of the hours of morning and evening work. We had, for instance, the very interesting statement from the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Council with regard to the working out of the scheme by which children in attendance in the day schools are allowed to earn 4*s.* grants through attendance in evening classes. I was very glad to hear the right hon. Gentleman point the moral of that experience when suggesting that facilities should be afforded for the teaching of drawing in the evening schools under similar conditions. I would venture to press most strongly that modelling should be taught coincidently with drawing, and under these same conditions. To introduce modelling would, after all, only be carrying out the further development of the Kindergarten methods now grown so much in favour. I speak the more confidently on that point, because I had an opportunity as Chairman of the Burslem School Board of trying this experiment with the permission of my right hon. Friend, and I think I shall be sustained in saying that the Report of the Inspectors specially sent down to inquire into the matter was, on the whole, very satisfactory and encouraging in regard to the method, though I am sorry to say that the conditions under which grants for this kind of teaching are at the present moment made are practically prohibitory, and will have to be reconsidered before the teaching can be effectively carried out. What has been said with regard to technical training surely will apply to our deficiencies in regard to those subjects to the importance of which the country is now become alive—to our deficiencies in commercial subjects, more especially languages. The teaching of modern languages in our evening classes would surely be a very helpful thing, and I cannot help feeling that it would be a very attractive method of bringing home instruction to both boys and girls attending the day schools. But the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Council will, no doubt, if he accept the principle of these suggestions and has any desire to carry them further, as I understand him to desire—he will have to revise the conditions of the present Code in regard to evening classes, and especially the 6th section, which declares that no scholar shall be presented for examination in additional subjects alone. That is equivalent to say that no children shall be allowed to earn grants in evening schools in additional subjects only. I do not know if an exception is made in the case of cookery; but if it is, then what I ask is practically conceded—namely, that that clause in the Code should be done away with, and then greater progress will be made in making these evening classes supplement day teaching, besides serving as continuation schools. It is particularly satisfactory to find that there is such a general concurrence in this House with regard to the value of this principle which has contributed so much to the success of the educational systems of Germany and Switzerland. It has been suggested that attendance at these evening classes—which are regarded as continuation schools—should be made compulsory. Well, I am ready to admit how beneficial has been the operation of compulsion in regard to ordinary elementary instruction; but I think it will be found that there is considerable divergence of view and difference in practice among Continental nations with regard to the expediency of enforcing attendance at the continuation schools. For instance, note the difference in two

States contiguous to each other, the Kingdoms of Bavaria and Wurtemberg. While evening schools are worked with great advantage in both of these States, there is a different practice in each with regard to compulsion. In one compulsion is in force, and in the other the parents are left to their own choice in the matter. I remember having a conversation with a distinguished man, who has rendered enormous service to the Education Department of one of these States, in which he pointed out to me that the country might well be satisfied if only the *élite* of the population availed themselves of the further education. At any rate, I hope that the question of applying compulsion will not be allowed to retard the carrying out of this most excellent system of continuation schools. It has been pointed out already that not only would this system have the effect of enabling boys and girls to further carry on their instruction, but that it would have a great effect in preventing that which now too commonly happens—namely, children losing in two or three years very much of what they have acquired during their whole school life. Well, Sir, we have heard to-day much that is practically encouraging with regard to the progress that has been made; but I cannot but feel that there is still cause for much disappointment in the figures showing the average attendance, and I hardly think the Committee could have been more profitably occupied than in considering how that low average is to be explained and how it can be amended. One, of course, must feel, from a money point of view, that it is a serious waste of power that school managers should have been called upon to find places for children and that a fourth of those places are normally unoccupied. I will not venture to trespass upon the ruling which the Chairman has laid down with regard to the discussion of the penny dinners. It is particularly gratifying, however, that they have succeeded so far, not only in satisfying humane and benevolent sympathies, but also, I imagine, in contributing very largely to improve the average attendance at the schools where the system has been carried out. I have had some experience in this matter myself, and no part of that experience has been more astonishing than that where I have found out the possibility of taking money from the children—a penny or a halfpenny from some—and ensuring a gratuitous meal to those who could not pay without its being known which of the children pay and which do not. The hon. Baronet who spoke from his experience of the London School Board made some reference to the possibility of our being called upon to feed our scholars gratuitously; but it is notable that the French and the Belgians regard the attendance of the children and their physical condition of such importance that it is a general practice to subsidize the efforts of the parents to provide a mid-day meal—that is done even after a practically gratuitous education has been given to the children. I remember being particularly struck by the system at Liège, where the children not only have a gratuitous meal, but free medical attendance as well when required. Well, there is one other point upon which I wish to say just one word, because we have seen cropping up now and then incidentally in the course of the speeches on this subject some references to the fact that these elementary schools are intended exclusively for the humbler classes of the country. I cannot help feeling that there is a sort of superstition that lies at the base of the view that is held on this subject by many people in this country, and which seems to suggest that the middle classes who can contribute so much to the support of these schools cannot, without loss of dignity, avail themselves of their advantages. Now, in most other countries these State schools are the common means of education of the country. I remember seeing myself, in Switzerland particularly, the children of the poorest and the children of the richest sitting side by side in these common schools—sitting together in the first grade of the system from which the ladder goes up. But I see Mr. Matthew Arnold refers to this matter, and says that a rich man in Zurich, the greatest employer of labour in Switzerland, told him that he sent his own children, both girls and boys, without any hesitation to the popular school. I think it would not be difficult to establish the fact that in all the subjects which are required to be taught in elementary schools better teaching is given in the popular schools than is to be had in more pretentious establishments, and I think, also, we may feel that however large the expenditure may be, and however inevitable may be the growth of it, it is the very best and most remunerative expenditure that this Committee can be asked to vote.

Mr. C. W. GRAY (Essex, Maldon): I wish to make one or two remarks in reference to what the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Brightside Division of Sheffield (Mr. Mundella) has said as to his desire in connection with education in the rural districts. Now, I am sure that all hon. Members who are interested in the rural districts wish that all opportunities for education should be given to the boys and girls—the sons and daughters—of the agricultural labourers who may have talent, which, when properly directed, would lead to their turning out very valuable members of society. I hope that no one will think that while venturing to criticize one or two remarks made by the right hon. Gentleman, I do not feel just as warmly upon this subject as the right hon. Gentleman does himself. But no one, it seems to me, up to the present, in this debate has for a moment considered the views of the agricultural labourers themselves upon this subject. I think when agricultural labourers are only obtaining the wages which they receive to-day to oblige them by law to keep their children at school for a year longer than they are required to do to-day would be a hardship to many of them. That is a point which ought to be remembered. When a man has a large family and is earning some 11*s*. or 12*s*. a-week it does seem to me very hard indeed to say to him—"You shall send four or five of your children to school until they are 14 years of age." I understood the right hon. Gentleman to say that if the children had not passed certain Standards he wished them to be kept at school until they were 14 years of age.

Mr. MUNDELLA: I was referring to the Report, page 14, and was commenting on the fact that vast numbers of children pass out of the school at 10 years of age, after passing the Fourth Standard.

Mr. C. W. GRAY: Quite so; but I am talking of those cases where children, either because they are not very bright, or for other reasons, do not pass the Standards quickly. The labourers have put it to me over and over again that they think there are cases of children who have not capacity to enable them to pass these Standards at all at any age, and that it would be much better to bring such children up in some suitable way—that is to say, in a way that would enable them to earn an honest living, by being allowed to learn agricultural work on the farms—instead of their being kept grinding away at what everyone who knows the character and disposition of the children must feel to be work at which they will never make any headway. The labourers do think that it is very hard that children having these characteristics should be forced to attend school so long as they are at present obliged to; and what the labourers will have to say when they hear the proposal which has come from the right hon. Gentleman—namely, that children of that description should be kept a year longer at school—I do not know; but I would advise the right hon. Gentleman and his Friends not to say much about the subject in our rural districts, so long as they think elections are in the air. The speeches which have been delivered in the course of this debate have been somewhat lengthy, and as I am a comparatively junior Member of the House I will refrain from detaining it any longer at this moment.

Mr. S. SMITH (Flintshire): I should like to be allowed to make a very few remarks upon this most important question, as it is one I have taken a deep interest in for many years. I regret that such a very important subject as the education of the people should be discussed in so thin a House, and so near the end of the Session, because, as has been said by some speakers to-day, there is no doubt that the education of the country is one of the most fundamental of all the interests with which we have to deal. It is one which has more to do with the welfare of the country than many others which often engage our attention. I listened with much interest to all that the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Council has said, and I must say I feel the warmest sympathy with many of his observations. I feel thankful to him for having so boldly advocated the establishment of evening classes, as I have been labouring for some years to bring about a system of evening continuation schools. It is true that in your Education Estimates laid before the House there is an appearance of a certain amount advancement. Well, I do not wish to say a word in disparagement of the educational staff of the Education Office of this country. They have done admirable work since the year 1870; but it must be remembered that they started from a condition of things which was almost as low as zero, and that there still remains an immense amount of work to be achieved. Twenty years ago the education of the country was at the very lowest, and though it is true we have made considerable advances since that time, yet I am bound to say that there still remains an immense amount of work to be done, looking at the progress which other nations have made. I have given a considerable amount of attention, during the last few years, to these subjects, and it has impressed itself upon my mind more and more that unless we quicken our pace, looking at what is going on in other States in educational matters, we shall soon fall hopelessly in the rear. Now, I wish to call attention mainly to what I think the defect in our present system of education in this country, and that is the very early age at which children leave school. We cannot too much emphazise that evil. It is totally impossible for children who leave school at the age of 11 or 12 to have any true conception of education at all. It is quite impossible to have any real culture of the mind, or formation of the character, proceeding from such an education. I have been examining the figures in the Education Report this year, and I find there—as anyone may who studies the subject—that a very large number of children leave school after passing the Fourth Standard; that another large section leave after passing the Fifth Standard; and that a comparatively small proportion remain to pass the Sixth Standard. What is the age at which they leave school? So far as I have been able to make out, the average age is scarcely higher than 12 years; in fact, in some parts of the country the average is as low as 11 years. I believe that in the town of Wolverhampton not less than 97 per cent of the children leave school at the age of 11. Let the Committee consider this fact—that in a large manufacturing town only 3 per cent of the children remain at school after the age of 11. I say that that is a shameful state of things. The point I wish to call attention to more especially is this—the terrible deterioration that takes place in the children after leaving school. At great labour, and at great expense, we bring children together in the schools we have provided for national education. We see a wonderful change for the better take place in them up to the age of 11 or 12—we see a great improvement in them in habits, in appearance, and behaviour. Then they leave school; and supposing you were able to bring them once more into the school some two years after their leaving what a change you would see! Everyone who mixes at all with this class of the population knows that the deterioration which by that time has taken place is something dreadful. The very appearance of the children is altered. They are lower in character, in habits, and conversation; they are dirty and untidy in their dress; they have contracted an amount of low cunning in running about the streets, and the value of what little education they have received is in very many cases almost entirely lost. I wish the Committee would allow me to read two or three sentences on this subject from a gentleman who has devoted more attention, I suppose, to this question of evening education amongst the poor than any other person in the country—I refer to Dr. Paton, of Nottingham. He says—First we build up at great expense a colossal system of primary education, and then we allow the results to be very largely wasted and lost. Teachers speak despairingly of the fruits of their labours in the children two years after school has been left. He says that the gardens which by daily culture have been made to show wonderful promise for the future are given over to utter neglect, and many a time the labour bestowed upon them is lost. He declares that we cease to educate our children at the most receptive period of their lives. These remarks must commend themselves to everyone. I entirely agree with Dr. Paton's observations. No doubt our children do leave school before their minds have reached the receptive period, because real education does not begin until about the age of 12. In my opinion the real receptive period is between the ages of 12 and 16, for it is then that the mind, so to speak, takes form and character—it is during that period that education forms and moulds the character—and during that period what kind of education do many of our children receive? They are still under the influence of education, but it is an education very different to that which they would get in our schools. They are being educated in the streets with low and vicious surroundings, in squalid homes, and by the popular penny serials which contain that miserable and wretched trash which circulates to such a vast extent amongst the children of the poor. They are being educated at the penny music gaff and the cheap dancing room. How, then, can we wonder that three or four years after they have left the great bulk of them have lost all the refining influences of their training, and sink so low in the social scale, and in very many cases become so degraded that it is absolutely impossible afterwards to raise them to a higher standard of life? A great proportion of the children are unable to maintain themselves, and I contend that we shall never succeed in raising the character of the children of the poor in this country, and that all our efforts to deal with the gigantic social evils with which we are brought face to face, unless we give to our children a truer, more thorough, and lasting education. We have in this country a greater mass of pauperism, human misery, and degradation than any other civilized country in the world. A larger proportion of the people of this country are unable to maintain themselves honestly, a larger proportion of the people of this country live in squalid and wretched homes than in any Continental country, than in any Colony, than in America, and I say that all our efforts to deal with these gigantic evils will fail unless we educate our children more thoroughly. I speak of things of which I have some experience, for I may venture to say that I have been connected with movements for the alleviation of the miseries and the improvement of the condition of these classes during the greater part of my life. As a member of one of the largest societies in this country, I have been brought face to face with all these facts, and have bought my experience dearly. I have learned by 20 or 30 years of incessant effort that you will make no palpable impression on the mass of social degradation that exists in the midst of our English towns, unless you lay hold of the children and give them a truer, more thorough, and lasting education than they get at present. If no other country in the world were ahead of us we might, perhaps, be contented to remain where we are; but it is an extraordinary fact that everywhere we go we now encounter on all sides people from countries whose education is immensely superior to our own. It is a shame that the richest country in the world should be content to allow its children to be worse educated than those of much poorer Continental countries existing close to our shores. In Germany, as most hon. Members are aware, education extends to a far older period of life than it does in England. I have been reading up a good deal upon that question lately, and I have been astonished to see what a much higher education is given in Germany to the whole mass of the population than is given in this country. In that country the age at which children leave the day school varies from 13½ to 14 years, and after that comes the evening continuation school in a large part of Germany, the attendance being compulsory up to the age of 16 years. Think of that, and think of the fact that our older children leave school for good and all at the age of 11 or 12 years. Under those circumstances we need not wonder that the Germans are beating us everywhere. Wherever our people come into fair and equal competition with the Germans our people have to give way, whether it is as clerks in London, as artizans or merchants abroad, everywhere Germans are going ahead of us, and I say we cannot wonder at it. The German people are far better educated, and, what is more, their education is far more judicious, useful, and practical than ours, and is far better calculated to develop the thinking, reasoning, and guiding powers than the hard mechanical system that prevails in our elementary schools. Now, a great deal has been said in the course of this debate about the evening classes, and it might be thought by some who have not very carefully studied the subject that we have a very good system of evening schools in this country. But what are the facts of the situation? Last year the total average attendance at evening schools in England and Wales was only 2,000, and the number has been steadily decreasing since the Act of 1870. The reason of it is this—our wooden system of elementary education so disgusts the children, and takes such little hold upon their intelligence, that it is almost impossible to get them to attend evening schools. The attendance has been steadily falling off until, virtually speaking, we may say that we have no evening schools at all now. It is true that last year noble efforts were made in London to resuscitate the evening school under the name of Recreative Schools, and it is true that a large number are attending those establishments, and it is true that more or less something has been done in the same direction in other large centres; but, properly speaking, the evening school system has fallen off. To all intents and purposes in this country the education of the children belonging to the masses of the population comes to an end between the ages of 11 and 12. I would ask hon. Members what would become of their children if they were to finish their education between the ages of 11 and 12? Would hon. Members expect their sons and daughters to maintain a decent position in life if they received no further mental training after that age? They would not—and yet human nature is the same all the world over. Nay, the poor even require more culture and more assiduous attention, for they learn less at home and are brought in contact with more dangerous influences than the children of hon. Members. I advocate this system of evening continuation schools not only for intellectual purposes, but also for moral purposes. I believe that the corruption of our children which goes on in the streets of this country is something dreadful. The children who leave school between the ages of 11 and 12, and go into the streets, learn and see everything that is bad; but if we could only keep them at evening schools up to the age of 15, I think we should thereby do more to elevate the moral standard of this country than by any other system which could be devised. I would urge the rendering of our evening schools more attractive. Children who attend them are very often tired out with their day's work, and unhappily the present schools to which we would wish them to go are unattractive. Certain regulations are laid down, and unfit those establishments for drawing a very large number of children. I am told that one of the rules to entitle a child to earn a grant is that it should commit 80 lines of English to memory. Surely that is unnecessary. What is wanted is not reading, writing, and arithmetic, and the committing of lines to memory, but simple technical education, education of the eye and the hand. Simple manual training in drawing, modelling, wood engraving, and such arts. Of course, there must be a certain amount of literary training, and a certain amount of scientific training of a simple kind; but I believe that it is quite possible to make these schools so bright, attractive, and interesting, that very little compulsion would be required to induce children to attend them. I do not think you will ever be able to bring the masses of the children into the evening continuation schools without some sort of compulsion; but I would propose that you should call it indirect compulsion. I would propose that the examination Standard should be raised to the Sixth and Seventh Standards all over the country. I would suggest that the rule for the future should be that all children shall attend the day schools till they have passed the Sixth and Seventh Standards, or until they have reached the age of 14 years; but I would do this—I would allow them to have a choice after passing the Fifth Standard either to complete their education in the day schools, or to attend the evening schools. The result of that would be that nine-tenths of the children would be taken by their parents after passing the Fifth Standard in the day schools, and put into the evening schools. In that way we should gradually draft the children into the evening schools without appearing to apply any special compulsion. We should make the evening schools, so to speak, a kind of refuge. I think the children would gladly resort to them, in order to escape from the more severe methods of the day school. I think that by this means we should get from 1,000,000 to 1,500,000 children to attend our evening schools. I would say that if children left the day schools at the age of 12, we should require them to attend the evening schools until the age of 14, and I should hope ultimately until the age of 15, because I think that the youngest age at which a child should be released from education. I might be met with this difficulty, and no doubt it is working in the minds of many here present—" How can you expect children to attend your evening schools, who have been working 10 hours a-day?" I have had seriously to reflect upon that point myself. We know that under the Factory Acts half-time begins at the age of 10, and full time at the age of 13. Well, I regard it as something barbarous that we should require children to work full time at so early an age as 13. I think it is physically most unhealthy. It produces a weak, stunted population, and I think our population will never be what it ought to be until we raise the age at which our children can commence working full time. I have not so much objection to half-time, because I think that a child can do almost all the mental work that is good for it in half a day. To my mind, three hours of mental work is quite as much as the children can stand. I therefore think that there might be a reasonable amount of half-time for children still, but I hold that the age of 10 is too young at which to begin half-time. If we could raise the age to 12 for commencing half-time it would be an advantage, and if we could raise the age at commencing full time to 15, that would be a still greater advantage. What I would recommend would be if the Government could persuade the House to adopt this plan that we should modify the Factory Acts so as to prevent children from working more than six hours a-day to enable the children to attend evening schools. That I believe would do more to lift up the whole level of the population in the next generation than all the other Acts which it is in our power to pass. We should in that way, I believe, enable the great mass of our population to qualify themselves for emigration. Our country, particularly our large towns, are overcrowded, and the children in our streets obtain an education which certainly does not fit them for life in the Colonies. I would give them an education calculated to fit them for useful careers in the Colonies. I would give them in our evening schools that practical training of eye and hand, as well as of the mind, which will elevate the ideas of our children, and will make them discontented with their lot in the streets, and anxious to join those hundreds of thousands of people enjoying a healthy and invigorating and substantial career in the Colonies. And now I have said most of that which I desired to say upon the subject. I would say a word here about our present system of education. I have already stated that it is too wooden in character. I do not believe in payment by results; I believe it was necessary at the beginning, but we have now outgrown it. It is a harsh system. It makes the school a scene of grinding, driving, and pushing to earn grants; it takes away the attention of the teacher from the level of the school in order to devote himself mainly to the most backward and stupid of the children; it keeps the whole level down. I am thankful that the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Council has indicated that he is now in favour of very much modifying the system of payment by results. I hope that sooner or later this country will follow in the wake of all other intelligent countries in making the examination of a much higher type depending on the general character of the school, and the general character of the education given, and also on individual examination for the purpose of passing a certain number of children all on the same level. I think the time has come when we ought to make a new departure altogether on the matter of education. I see an hon. Friend here who is so very anxious to have an opportunity of saying something himself on the matter. I shall be happy to make way for him, therefore I will be as brief as I possibly can. I hope the Bill for Technical Education will pass. It will deal with some of the points I have endeavoured to place before the Committee; but it will only be in a small degree, because it will only touch a small proportion of the people of the country. If the Government would consent so to widen that measure as to make it deal with the whole question of evening schools, they would cover very much of the ground which I have tried to describe to the Committee. I would urge the Government to do that; but whether they do so or not, I hope that before voting these sums Parliament will insist that there shall be such an extension of the educational system in the country as shall get rid of the terrible poverty and misery that we have in the midst of us.

MR. J. G. TALBOT (Oxford University): I think it comes with a very bad grace for the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Brightside Division of Sheffield (Mr. Mundella) to throw stones at the Royal Commission now sitting, to treat it with scorn and contempt, and to suggest that its Report will be of no value. I listened with some surprise to the right hon. Gentleman's speech. The right hon. Gentleman has been Vice President of the Council, and has had his share of responsibility, and certainly it was strange on his part to take up the attitude he has adopted towards the Commission which has been for two years dealing with a great many important subjects bearing upon education. I always understood that the right hon. Gentleman, if he was anything, was an educationalist, and yet this great and important Commission which has now been sitting for two years —and of which the right hon. Gentleman was, by the way, a Member when it first sat—is to be treated with scorn because he does not know what will come of it. That is not very encouraging for us on this side of the House, who have been urged to put aside Party politics in dealing with this question of education. The Commission have devoted a great deal of labour and attention to this important subject, and after having done so, and after having examined an enormous number of witnesses, and reported with considerable care, to be told that the Report was of no value is, to say the least of it, discouraging. I do not think that the way in which the right hon. Gentleman has spoken on this subject is at all the way in which an ex-Minister of the Crown ought to have treated a matter of this importance. Let me here call the attention of the right hon. Gentleman to some of the subjects which we are now considering—some points under the consideration of the Commission upon which I decline to express any opinion, seeing that they are still under discussion. They are considering the question of payment by results. They are considering the question of the merit grant; they are considering the question of over pressure; they are considering the question of compulsory attendance; they are considering the question of the 17*s.* 6*d.* limit; and they are also devoting attention to evening schools, upon which the right hon. Gentleman made such an interesting speech. They are also considering the question of cookery, and the question of drawing. These are some of the subjects to which we have been devoting a great deal of attention, and these are questions upon which I believe we shall be able to make some recommendations. I do not say whether the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Council (Sir William Hart Dyke) will be able to accept the recommendations, but I believe that if the country looks at them fairly and dispassionately they will lead to great results in the future. Of course, if we are to be told *ab initio* that whatever we say will not be worth hearing, neither this Royal Commission, nor any other Royal Commission, under such circumstances, can hope to do any good. I will not be led by the right hon. Gentleman, nor by any other right hon. or hon. Gentleman into expressing an opinion on these vexed subjects. As to compulsion, I am not going to say whether it can be carried out or not; but I do think that the right hon. Gentleman, and those who agree with him, ought to study a little more than they appear to have done the conditions of life in the agricultural districts. A great deal of the misconception which arises upon this matter takes place in the fact that the right hon. Gentleman, and those like him, live mostly in the atmosphere of towns, and very naturally perhaps go to other countries for recreation, and do not take sufficient pains to ascertain the conditions of life in their own rural districts. Surely anyone who wishes to solve the great question of compulsory education so far as the rural districts are concerned should study the question at home. He should go and see how the people live, and having done that, I do not think he would be prepared to lay down such broad and deep lines as have been laid down by the right hon. Gentleman without a little more searching of heart than sometimes takes place in this House. I am not going in any way to express an opinion upon this subject, but I think I may refer to facts and figures in the Blue Book for the purpose of showing the relative positions of the board schools and voluntary schools. The average attendance at elementary schools of all kinds is 3,438,425 children; and of these there are in voluntary schools 2,187,118, or nearly two-thirds of the whole number. The cost per head in London voluntary schools is £2 3*s.* 5*d.*, and in London school boards £3 3*s.* 4*d.*; the average grant earned is 17*s.* 3¼*d.* in the the voluntary schools, and 18*s.* 6¾*d.* in the board schools. These figures may be appealed to in support of the maintenance of the compact originally made by Mr. Forster that board schools were to supplement, and not to supplant, voluntary schools. It is a notable fact that in the past year the accommodation in voluntary schools has risen by 54,787 places. The Report of the Education Department, speaking of voluntary schools, states that—

> "The great majority of schools which have come under inspection since 1870 have been erected, enlarged, or improved without any Government aid, at a cost to promoters of at least £6,000,000.

It is necessary to remind the House when this subject is under discussion that voluntary schools are entitled to consideration and to equal treatment with board schools. There is only one other subject on which I wish to detain the Committee for a moment, and it is connected with pensions. There is one point—namely, that the benefit of pensions which have been recognized by the authorities should be extended to teachers who were in training at the date of the Revised Code, and who had entered as pupil teachers before that date. This is not a large subject; but the present condition of affairs bears hardly upon a few excellent teachers. What I ask for would involve no fresh burden upon the taxes, because it would come out of the limited grant of £6,000 a-year; it would merely imply that the grant would continue a few years longer. I refer, of course, to the Revised Code of August, 1862, and here is an example of the unequal working of the arrangement. There were two pupil teachers in 1862; one went to College in 1862-3, became trained master after 1862, and so lost his chance of a pension; the other became an assistant master at once, although untrained, and although less qualified as a teacher, is eligible for a pension. Surely a means ought to be found of correcting such an anomaly as this, by which of two contemporary pupil teachers the less qualified gains a pension which the other loses. I am glad to have an opportunity of putting this matter before the right hon. Gentleman, and I hope he will give his attention to the subject. I am obliged to the Committee for the attention it has paid to the few remarks I have made; and, in conclusion, I would merely express a hope that this great educational question will be discussed without a semblance of Party bitterness.

MR. MUNDELLA: I should just like to explain, in regard to what the hon. Member has just stated, that I said nothing at all in depreciation of voluntary schools. I simply referred to a page in the Report, which the hon. Member has not touched upon, to the fact that the voluntary schools are earning 1*s.* per head less than the board schools, and I expressed regret that that should be so.

MR. JAMES STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton): I will only detain the Committee for a very few moments, my desire being to speak directly to the point of the expenditure of money. Before doing so, let me congratulate the Committee on the fact that during this debate we have heard little or anything of a reactionary expression of opinion on the matter of education. On the whole, from both sides of the House, we have heard only expressions in favour of the forward movement of education, which goes to lift this question out of the reach of Party matters. But, Sir, it is a remarkable fact, which I would call attention to, that though I have been in the House four years, this is the first opportunity I have had of attending a debate on Educational Estimates. They have always been pushed aside to a late or, rather, an early hour of the morning. I am glad that a satisfactory opportunity has been given to-day for discussing these matters and expressing our opinions upon them. As to the expenditure of the £3,500,000 that we have had to do with, the Committee, I think, will admit—it must be evident to them—that you cannot work without tools, and that however much we may hope to improve the objects for which this money is expended, still we can never get the worth of that money unless we are employing good and well-trained teachers for carrying out the system. The whole of the education on any line, whether it be technical or elementary or any other line, is always bound to depend upon the provision of proper teachers. Upon that point I wish to make a single remark. In the Report of Mr. Matthew Arnold—which has now been before the country for about a year—marked attention is drawn to this very same point—the necessity for improved training on the part of our teachers. He shows how very much improvement in the character of our teachers will facilitate that very desirable method of instruction which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Brightside Division of Sheffield (Mr. Mundella) has foreshadowed as desirable; and may thereby, both directly and indirectly, through that means relieve the pressure on the children, and make it possible for them study a larger number of subjects in our elementary schools. Now, with respect to the training of our teachers, I want to come to a practical point, and that is all that I rise to speak about. We have at present a certain number of training colleges. In these training colleges, roughly speaking, three-fifths of our teachers are trained, and the remaining two-fifths are not trained in the training colleges, so badly off are we for trained teachers in this country. I have nothing to say against the training colleges. I do not propose to interfere with them in any extension of the opportunities for our teachers to be trained which I might urge on the Committee. This, however, is what I would urge—namely, the desirability of having a large number of day training colleges in the great towns. I would have the educational machinery, so to speak, prepared in the towns the populations of which require to be educated. I fancy, for instance, that the supply of teachers needed in Birmingham would, roughly speaking, be about 100 per year, and you have there an opportunity for a sufficiently large institution, to be conducted on a cheap and easy basis, for the production of the number of teachers required. From the calculation which I have gone into upon this matter, I have reason to believe that you could have 10 or 12 of such day training colleges, or day training schools, for teachers, giving them a three years' training, in 10 or 12 parts of the country, turning out, roughly speaking, annually, 1,000 trained teachers, at an expense of no more than £50,000 or £60,000 a-year. These are figures which I have gone into, and when I bring that before the Committee, and show that by so small an expenditure such a valuable result can be gained, it will be seen how immediately my remarks are directed towards making the £3,500,000 more useful to the country. You might thereby be producing instead of 1,500 teachers which you produce per annum now out of your training colleges at a cost of £115,000 per year, produce nearly twice that number at a cost of only about 50 per cent more than the present cost, and the circumstances are such that this could be both efficiently and cheaply done. Now, in the neighbouring country in Scotland they turn out there just now no fewer per annum than 426 trained teachers from the training colleges, taking the population of this country to seven times that of Scotland, if you multiply that figure by seven you get, roughly speaking, twice as many trained teachers turned out in Scotland as we have in England, and we know how much more efficient education in Scotland is than education in this country. Now, I want to call attention to this, that the sum of money that I have mentioned in connection with day training colleges includes not only the two years you require as at present in residential training colleges; but, practically speaking, a three years' course. And there is one point upon which I ought to call attention here; it is, that at present the teachers under training in training colleges in England do not get anything beyond the training colleges; whereas the teachers from the training colleges in Scotland in a large number of instances attend the University. Out of 302 teachers attending training colleges in Scotland last year 160 attended classes and lectures at the University—that is to say, 55 per cent of the whole, and many of those attended a two or three years' course, and that is not including those who, after having become teachers, come back and take degrees in the University. I have the testimony of one of the best known Professors in Edinburgh that those teachers who attend his classes are amongst his best pupils there. I wish to call attention to a point bearing upon this, and I do not know, Sir, whether you will call me to Order. I was afraid, Sir, that you were about to rise to call me to Order, though I could not see why you should do so, becaus

I am showing where it is that we may provide the material for the better utilizing of this £3,500,000. What I come to is this—that if you establish 10 or 12 more large day training colleges in our big towns, you find you have now provided in these big towns what you did not possess when the Elementary Education Act came into force—namely, colleges of the same kind that you find in the Scotch Universities. You therefore have the very means of giving that higher education to your school teachers than which nothing has been more beneficial in improving the school training in Scotland. In the matter of the training of our teachers, we are vastly behind our neighbouring countries, as has been shown by Mr. Arnold's Report, which Report I commend to the consideration of the Committee and the country at large.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.): I will not detain the Committee more than one moment. My only object in rising is to state as emphatically as I can how diametrically opposed are the men I represent to the opinions expressed by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Flintshire (Mr. Samuel Smith) and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Brightside Division of Sheffield (Mr. Mundella). What the agricultural labourers want—and I speak of what I know—I have been called reactionary by the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Hoxton Division of Shoreditch (Mr. James Stuart)—is not that their children shall be under educated, but that they shall be relieved from attendance at school after the age of 12 years. It is not that the labourer feels the payment of the school pence that he makes this demand, but that the labourer is deprived of the use of his children at an age when they may be made useful. I have no intention to make a speech upon this question. I only call attention to it because I have a notice on the Paper bearing upon it, and because I hope next Session to be able to call the attention of the House to the matter, when I trust to have the support of Members sitting on the Ministerial side of the House who represent agricultural constituencies.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar): As I have the honour of being a colleague of my hon. Friend the Member for Oxford University (Mr. J. G. Talbot) upon the Commission to which reference has been made, I propose to occupy the attention of the Committee for a very few minutes. The discussion has ranged over a very large number of subjects, and I was very glad, indeed, that the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Council (Sir William Hart Dyke) drew very particular attention to the question of attendance. The Return which has been presented to the House shows that there are no less than 1,000,000 children out of school who ought to be in school, and that the average attendance of children is 1,250,000 less than it ought to be if the children attended properly. This is a most important matter, and one to which the earnest attention of the Committee should be directed. I, myself, believe that the two weakest spots in our educational position are London and the rural districts. The hon. Baronet the Member for the Evesham Division of Worcester (Sir Richard Temple) said that the attendance in London was very good, and no doubt, as compared with the rural districts and some parts of the country, it is very good; but, as compared with many of the large towns, it is by no means as satisfactory as it ought to be. I do not desire to blame the London School Board for the deficiency of attendance in London. I believe, on the whole, that the work of the visitors and the By-laws Committee is done in a satisfactory manner, and it is due very much to causes over which they have no control that there is this deficiency in the attendance. The two chief causes of this deficiency are the action of the magistrates of London and the action of the Home Office. While I had the honour of a seat on the London School Board, the Board were continually going to the Educational Department, asking them that School Board cases should have a fairer and more satisfactory hearing than they get at the present time, because it was proved to us, over and over again, that not only were a very large number of the magistrates out of sympathy with the Board, and that they always put the School Board cases last, and did their best to prevent them being taken; but, as a matter of physical fact, there was not actually time to take the School Board cases if the other cases were to be taken in a satisfactory manner. Therefore we urged on the Department, and they urged, time after time, on the Home Office, that there should be greater facilities given for the hearing of summonses for non-attendance at school. I wish to point out that it is not because the School Board, or any other body, desire to be harsh in this matter, that they desire greater facilities. Nothing is worse, nothing is more injurious to the parents, than that there should not be proper facilities for the hearing of these cases, because parents in London are dragged to the police courts time after time, not only lose their wages, and have consequently to consort with persons of low character attending the court; and, therefore, I contend that greater facilities for the hearing of these cases should be given, not only in the interests of the children and of the country, but in the pecuniary and moral interests of the parents themselves. I hope that the difficulty of getting magistrates to convict in clear cases, and the mere physical difficulty of obtaining the hearing of School Board cases may gradually be overcome. Then, again, other stumbling blocks in the way of compulsion are many of the School Attendance Committees in rural districts. I think hon. Gentlemen opposite who have spoken have entirely missed the point in this question, because they say that the children ought not to be compelled to remain at school until 14 years of age. I think they exaggerated a good deal what my right hon. Friend the Member for the Brightside Division of Sheffield (Mr. Mundella) said. Our point is that they do not attend, at present, even up to the age or Standard that is expected of them, and a very low Standard it is, too; and we wish the Department to give some attention to this matter of attendance in rural districts. It was given in evidence before the Commission—it is published, and, therefore, I am sure my hon. Friend (Mr. J. G. Talbot) will not object to my mentioning it—it was given in evidence by the Department themselves that they never interfered in the matter of attendance in rural districts unless the matter were brought particularly to their notice. But there is no one to call their attention to it in that active manner; and I think it ought to be the duty of the Department, through their Inspectors, to see that some kind of inquiry into the attendance in rural districts is properly carried out. Some hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway said it was very hard on the parents in rural districts that the children should be forced to attend school; but if they look at the Return of the Education Department they will see that, in a large number of rural districts where there are school boards, the children are as capable of attending school as those who reside in large towns. It is the laxity of the School Authorities, not the physical difficulty in the way of the children, that causes this great loss to the nation in the non-attendance of children at school. This laxity of attendance is very hard on the teachers; it is unjust to the children who are visited with the sins of their parents; and it involves a great waste of money to the country at large. Just one word on another point in connection with this matter. I am sure none of us desire that compulsion should be carried out in a harsh manner, but we do believe, that with full regard to the liberty of the subject and convenience of the parents, it may be carried out better than it is at present. But while we desire compulsion we also desire to attract children to school, and the best way of making schools attractive is to give the greatest possible liberty to the managers and teachers. A great deal has been said about the question of payment by results. I believe that so long as voluntary schools exist, and so long as non-representative management exists you must have, in the upper standards at least, some form of individual examination, but, at the same time, a great deal more liberty might be given to the managers of the schools. My hon. Friend the Member for the London University (Sir J. Lubbock) has already pointed out to the Committee that in the matter of class subjects greater liberty might be given to the managers. I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Council (Sir William Hart Dyke) is a protectionist in the matter of corn, but he is certainly a protectionist in the matter of grammar, because he forces grammar down the throats of all children throughout the country, and refuses to give any choice to the managers in this respect. Is it not absurd that we have amongst our class subjects, this repulsive subject of grammar, and force everyone to take it, and that most useful subjects of science should find scarcely any place in our schools? That is entirely due to the obstinacy of the Department, not merely under the right hon. Gentleman, but under his

Predecessor in Office the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Brightside Division of Sheffield as well. I hope that the right hon. Gentleman (Sir William Hart Dyke) will take this matter into consideration. It is a small matter, but it is a matter in which I believe we are all agreed. I do not think that he need plead that a Royal Commission is sitting as an excuse for not taking this matter into consideration, and for giving the managers throughout the country full choice in class subjects.

Mr. ADDISON (Ashton-under-Lyne): I do not propose to say more than a word upon what the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Poplar Division of the Tower Hamlets (Mr. Sydney Buxton) has just called a small subject. I consider it an important one. The hon. Member for Hanley (Mr. Woodall) pointed out that the time table was already crowded, and that a couple of hours in the forenoon and a couple of hours in the afternoon is as much time as we can reasonably expect children to give to educational matters. What I desire to say is this—that if the localities are allowed a choice of subjects, it would not only be a good thing, but they might, to a great extent, or entirely, get rid of one of the subjects which is called English. English consists chiefly of two subjects. One of them might be much minimized, and that is spelling. I quite agree that children ought to have a good wholesome foundation of spelling, but I protest against their time being taken up with the *minutiæ* of spelling when it could be more usefully employed in other directions. Spelling is a mere arbitrary sort of art, and there is no addition to be made to human knowledge by pursuing it into all its niceties. How can it matter, for instance, whether we spell threatre with "tre" or "ter" as the Americans do? All this *minutiæ* is a matter of little or no importance, and is not education in the true sense of the word. I cannot possibly understand why so many years should be taken up with the *minutiæ* of spelling when they might be so usefully employed in that drawing of which we have heard so much. I admit that in some degree spelling is necessary as a foundation, but what are we to say of that barbarous and ridiculous subject which is called grammar? This is really a very important matter for the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Council (Sir William Hart Dyke) to direct his attention to. As regards the grammar, I do not say for a moment that the study of the structure of languages—ancient or modern—is not of great interest to advanced students. The study of the comparative structure of the different languages is a beautiful one, but guarding myself in that way, I maintain that grammar as taught in our elementary schools is entirely useless. It is supposed to be in some mysterious way necessary; but it does not teach people the use of words, the meaning of words, or how to pronounce words—how to speak. It teaches them literally nothing in the world except to say "I go," instead of "I went," and the like, which they might equally well learn by obsertion, and not by a number of barbarous and tiresome rules which are almost unintelligible to anyone who does not know how to speak without them. It is useless for speaking, it is equally useless for writing or composition. All the great literary masters from my own namesake to Macaulay and Carlyle, and other great writers, have made styles for themselves. Until we get rid of the superstition that grammar is any good, or that the *minutiæ* of spelling is any use, we shall waste a great deal of time. I urge upon the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Council not only that the Code may be in this respect modified, but that in reality there should be no Code at all, or at any rate very little. I certainly think that more freedom in the choice of subjects should be left to those who understand the want of the district in which the school is situated.

Mr. PICTON (Leicester): It is astonishing how much agreement of opinion there seems to be this afternoon between the two sides of the House. I am very glad indeed to support the appeal made by the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Ashton-under-Lyne (Mr. Addison), to the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Council on the subject of that exceedingly dry and uninteresting study—elementary grammar. If the study could be put off until children and young people had sufficiently matured intelligence to see where the interest of the subject lies, then it might have an educational value, but at present it is simply discouraging, and for the young mind disgusting. I do hope, at any rate, that entire liberty will be given to school managers to say whether they will have it or not as a class subject. I suppose that in the course of this conversation we are all of us anxious to urge upon the attention of the House some particular point. My point is the Kindergarten system, and that has not been referred to this afternoon. In the interesting speech made by the hon. Baronet the Member for the Eversham Division of Worcester (Sir Richard Temple), he insisted upon the necessity of what, I think, the formative part of education. I ask, Sir, if we can be satisfied with the results that have been attained hitherto in this respect. We all rejoice that the criminal statistics have been very much reduced since the increase of education, and this, so far as it goes, is proof of good moral intercourse; but if we are to judge by the conversation in the streets, or at any rate in crowded places of popular assembly, I fear we shall not come to so satisfactory a conclusion. Surely when generation after generation, counting a generation of school children at five or six years—have been instructed in what is called English, and above all in the use of grammar and the value of words, we may expect that the conversation of the majority of the English people would not consist so largely in the repetition of one or two monotonous epithets, and especially one which is never absent from the conversation even of those which have been brought up in private or voluntary schools. I think we ought to see some improvement in this respect. So far, I quite agree with the hon. Baronet (Sir Richard Temple) that the formative element should be more considered than it is at present. You will never produce that moral effect you want to exert upon the minds of the very young, unless you make all their lessons interesting. Let them love the school, and feel that it is as it were a second home. The Report of Mr. Matthew Arnold upon schools has been mentioned several times this afternoon, and I must quote—though I do it with grief and sorrow — certain words of his which strike me as being exceedingly sad—

> "The fault of the teaching in our public schools at home is, as I have often said, that it is so little formulative."

I hope the hon. Baronet will bear that in mind in carrying out his own high and important duties.

> "It gives the children power to read a newspaper and write a letter, to cast accounts, and it gives them a certain number of pieces of knowledge, but it does little to touch their nature for good, and to mould it."

Now, that, I think, is exceedingly sad coming from a man of such wide experience as Mr. Matthew Arnold. But that is confirmed by the new Report of the Education Department on the training colleges. If the teachers themselves have but little formative influences brought to bear upon them in the course of their training, how are they to be expected to exert that formative influence on their pupils? In the Report on training colleges for for schoolmasters, Mr. Oakley tells us the complaint is of want of intelligence on the part of the students in the colleges. In the Report it is shown that such answers were given to questions as that Shakespeare was a theological writer; that he was the author of the *Waverley Novels*; that he was the author of *East Lynne*, and that Bacon was credited with the *Principia Latina*. Now, all these matters point very much to the advantage of formative influences, and what I contend is that if you are to have these formative influences you must begin at the beginning, you must take in hand the youngest children, and you must give not "pieces of knowledge" they are not capable of digesting, but you must surround them with certain influences that will develop their faculties. German writers on education tell us that a young child coming to school at the age of six years can neither speak properly, nor see properly, nor hear rightly, nor use his fingers correctly, and that the first object of a teacher ought to be to develop the intelligent use of the various bodily or active powers it possesses. That is just what the Kindergarten system aims at. It is made a reproach against Kindergarten that it does not begin by teaching reading, writing, and arethmetic, and unfortunately the Education Department will not listen to its exclusive employment because it does not teach children the *minutiæ* of spelling, and does not immediately teach them the difference between a noun and a verb, and between an adverb and a preposition. I think it is high time some trial of this system were made. Mark what you would get. If you begin by developing the whole body and mind of the little children, then you can evolve from these elementary exercises other and higher lessons which shall include the sort of manual practice which is constantly advocated now, but which shall take also the intellectual elements, and so shall prepare the growing boy or girl for the higher technical school in the future. When we insist upon manual instruction, let us be aware we do not abuse this new fashionable doctrine. Once we begin to make a mere mechanical use of it, and try to make a boy or girl a mere saw or sewing machine, we altogether fail in our object. If we are to carry out this doctrine correctly, I am convinced we must begin with the Kindergarten, and I beseech the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Council (Sir William Hart Dyke) to take this matter into his earnest consideration, and lay the foundation of a truly combined, and organized, and purified system of education from the lowest class in the infants' school, even to the Universities. I speak feelingly on this subject, because when I happened to be a Member of a little school board in one of the suburbs of of London, I endeavoured to get liberty for that board—it only managed two schools—to depart a little from the ordinary methods of instruction, and use the Kindergarten as nearly as possible exclusively. You observe there are no Standards for children below seven years of age, and what we wished to undertake was that, if the Education Department would kindly permit an abrogation in the case of our two schools, the children should pass the First Standard when they were seven years old. This is more than the Kindergarten ought to undertake; but we undertook it. I wrote to the Education Department making this suggestion and I reminded them of certain passages in a letter to school boards emanating from the Department which, I thought, facilitated the granting of my request. I have reason to believe that my letter was never read. The fact is, that in reply to me the Department very kindly declined to express any opinion, and still more kindly sent to me the very document for my information from which I had quoted to them for their information. This fact proves to me very well that my letter was never read in the Education Department. I think it is time that some attention was given to this question of the adoption of the Kindergarten system by the Education Authorities. The present system wants altering, and a very slight step would be necessary to alter it in the direction I suggest. I think that wherever you find an intelligent body of managers who understand the subject and who undertake that their children shall pass through the Second Standard at eight years of age, liberty ought to be given to them to employ the Kindergarten system exclusively, and that you should not insist upon little ones being examined in reading, writing, and arithmetic before that age. 1 have not attempted to refer to documents; but the directions to Inspectors certainly show that it is expected that little children of four and five years of age shall have made certain physical and tangible progress towards the reading of words of one syllable and the writing of single letters. This is inconsistent with the Kindergarten system. It is inconsistent with the right exercise of formative influences. My remarks upon this Vote are necessarily somewhat fragmentary; but my point is that if we begin at the beginning and adopt the Kindergarten system in our infant class, we shall evolve from it one continuous system of manual, spiritual, and bodily education which will prepare children for the highest avocations to which they may be called.

Mr. MARJORIBANKS (Berwickshire): I desire, on behalf of the Scotch Members of the House of Commons, to make an appeal to English Members. We, the Scotch Members, are very anxious to get the Scotch Vote discussed this afternoon, and I really do think, without at all depreciating the importance of the Vote, that at this period of the Session we might hope to get the two principal Votes for English and Scotch education in the course of one afternoon. It is quite possible for us to carry the discussion too far, and I do hope that hon. Members will consent to allow, at least, two Votes to be taken this afternoon.

Sir WILLIAM HART DYKE: I, of course, feel that I have no right to put any pressure upon the Committee in regard to the length of the discussion, and I only rise now to thank the Committee generally for the kind and courteous reception they have given to the appeal I made in introducing this Vote. This discussion, as has been truly said, has ranged over considerable ground, and I assure the Committee that I have listened to the discussion with the greatest care and interest. I have taken note of all the chief points urged by hon. Members, and a good many proposals which have been made I fully sympathize with. I will take care all the points receive my serious consideration, and I trust to formulate some proposal in respect to them. I only now conclude by urging the Committee, considering the lateness of the Session and the reasons just adduced by my hon. Friend the Member for Berwickshire (Mr. Marjoribanks), to agree to the Vote without further debate.

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I do not want to inflict upon the Committee any lengthened observations, but there are one or two points which I have been specially asked to bring before the Committee upon the Education Vote. One of these points relates to the position of the teachers of which nothing whatever has been said this afternoon. If we waive our right to bring forward such important matters as this upon the present occasion, shall we have an opportunity of referring to them on Report, or at any subsequent stage? If not, I am bound to say I shall sit here until the House is adjourned, and if necessary, oppose the taking of the Vote to-night, in order that the question of the status of our teachers may be considered in Committee.

Sir WILLIAM HART DYKE: I presume that there will be no difficulty in raising the question upon a future occasion.

General GOLDSWORTHY (Hammersmith): I have only one observation to make before the Vote is passed, and that has reference to the treatment of the people in my borough who cannot pay their school fees. At present owing to the fact that we have only a half-day police court at Hammersmith these people have very frequently to attend at the Westminster police court. I think that the Education Department and the London School Board might arrange to have a magistrate specially told off to take School Board cases—a magistrate who would go from one place to another, and thus avoid the necessity of parents being dragged long distances to court, and being obliged when they get there to consort very often with disreputable characters.

Dr. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): I should like to point out the anomaly there is between the English and the Scotch grant. Owing to the different system of reckoning the time under the two systems a difference is made in the grant. If the hour were more convenient I should emphasize this difference by proposing to reduce the amount of the Estimate by the difference which occurs; but, under the circumstances, I content myself by calling attention to the difference. It is obviously unjust that a different scale of grant should prevail in the two countries.

Vote *agreed to.*

Resolution to be reported.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum, not exceeding £213,392, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1888, for Public Education in Scotland."

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) (Glasgow and St. Andrew's Universities): I shall occupy the time of the Committee very briefly, but it is advisable that I should state certain facts as shortly as I can which will place the Committee in general possession of the present state of things in regard to education in Scotland. In the first place, I will refer to a matter which has been noticed before, and that is the cost of the Scotch Education Department in consequence of the change made in its transference to a separate Committee. The cost in London is practically the lowest possible. It amounts to 1·7 per cent of the whole cost of Scotch education, and that is a diminution upon last year, when it was 1·8 per cent. A comparison with the old arrangement shows that while the cost of the higher staff which was always separate for the two countries amounted in 1885 to £3,962, it now amounts to £3,303. The removal of the clerical staff which in 1885 was paid from the English Vote brought about this result, that the English Vote was reduced by £3,417, as representing the Scotch work in the general office. The amount now paid in the Scotch Office for clerical work is £4,286. Thus the higher staff costs

£659 less, and the clerical staff £869 more, making a total difference of increase of £210. But the additional work which is done in consequence of what has happened within the last two years is greatly out of proportion to this increase. The letters received in the Scotch Education Department on Scotch education business increased in the first year of the new arrangement by no less than 67 per cent, and there is an increase in the present year equal in proportion to that again of another 67 per cent on what it was before, so that there is an enormous increase of clerical work for Scotland compared with what there used to be. As regards the new work done by the Department within a recent period the inspection of higher schools has been conducted in Scotland to the extent of 38 schools, and then, in addition to that, there are cases under the Endowed Schools scheme, of which 292 have been submitted, 190 approved, 39 remitted to amend, and 62 under consideration. Of the 170 that have already been laid on the Table of this House all have been approved except one which was disapproved on a technical ground only. As regards the annual grant, the net increase in Scotland in the earnings of annual grant amounts to £29,129, and the total Vote to £553,392. This increase is due to two causes. First, the average attendance has increased; and, second, the amount earned by the individual has increased also. The average attendance, estimated at 491,197, was last year 476,890, showing a considerable increase. In 1873, when this may be compared with the aided schools, there was an attendance of 220,508 in the aided schools. These, of course, did not comprise all, because there was no opportunity at the time to obtain correct statistics, and, therefore, it is impossible to make an exact comparison; but still the figures give a very clear indication of a very large increase, and in addition to that in regard to the increase upon the average attendance, and the amount earned, it must be noticed that the Commission some years before reported that the other schools were not, as a rule, efficient at all. But the increase upon the individual earnings is the most startling of all. In 1873 it was 9*s*. 10¾*d*., in 1886 it had risen to 18*s*. 7½*d*., and in this year, as estimated according to the knowledge already acquired, it has risen to 18*s*. 11*d*. This indicates, I think, increased industry and increased intelligence and attainment on the part of the children, and also, I think, greater energy and success on the part of the teachers. A few words upon certain sub-heads. One sub-head disappears altogether; that is the sub-head of building grants. All the applications were finally dealt with, and the school accommodation in Scotland is now practically complete for some time, except in so far as regards certain particular cases. Of course, as regards rapidly-increasing population, in some cases it can never practically be held to be complete. But there is in Scotland at the present moment accommodation for 701,598, or no less than 17·81 per cent of the population. In 1872 there was accommodation for 274,000. The cost at which increased accommodation has been provided is £3,800,900 from rates, and £577,955 from grants. The attendance has greatly increased, but still it is somewhat deficient. As against 656,464, which would be the proper average, the actual average attendance has been 483,996, showing a difference of 172,468. It is much to be feared that the compulsory powers possessed under the Act of 1872 are not efficiently exercised in some cases to a very considerable extent. This particularly applies, of course, to the Highlands, where no doubt there are special difficulties; but the failure increases the burden on the locality by the loss of grant, and it is to be feared that in many cases it does not result so much from the impossibility, from distance or weather, of the children getting to school, as it is from their illegal employment in contravention of the Act. In 1885 with a view of stimulating attendance in Highland schools, a special grant was offered to them, which came to 5*s*., 6*s*., 7*s*. or 8*s*., according to the state of the facts instead of 4*s*., on higher percentages. This has had a good effect, because the amount paid as special grant in 1886 among that sparse population has been £3,136. That shows a substantial advance, though it does not reach the extent to which we hope it may come yet; and the grant was shared by 374 out of 647 schools, which shows that a substantial improvement has been made in a large number of schools. Then, as regards Gaelic teaching, further inducements have been offered to pupil teachers who know the Gaelic language to join the training colleges. Marks are allowed for Gaelic in the entrance examination, and also Gaelic itself is recognized as a specific subject, although I am sorry to say it has not been very readily taken up. Of secondary schools, 38 schools have been examined, of which 22 were under school boards and six under voluntary management. I am sorry to say the results do not indicate a flourishing condition of these secondary schools as a whole. This is, to a great extent, caused by scanty resources, and a consequently small staff and meagre appliances for carrying on the work. Pupils, unfortunately, also do not complete the curriculum. They leave after the one or two years, and the higher classes are very much attenuated. This is to be regretted, and the Department is considering how to deal with it. We hope much from having an outgoing examination from these schools, and this proposal receives general support, but I urge very strongly that voluntary efforts will do more for these secondary schools than they have done in the past. With regard to changes in the Code, the chief change has been the abandonment of the individual examination in the lower Standards, which after what has been said to-day, I am sure the Committee would approve. This facilitates greater freedom of organization in the schools, greater opportunity of observing the capacity of the children, thereby adapting the training to encourage the children, and to prevent that feeling of despair, and of being left behind on the road, from which children suffer acutely and often abandon the race of education altogether. The evils of mere payments by results are thus, to some extent, modified. Our action in this direction is necessarily limited by the Parliamentary rule of payment by results; but in so far as we have been able to do it consistently with that rule, a great deal of good has been effected. The second change has been the development of class subjects, to distribute intelligence over the school. There is a Committee sitting on this subject, of which the hon. Member for the City of Perth (Mr. C. S. Parker) is Chairman, and the hon. and learned Member for Inverness (Mr. Finlay) and Mr. Cochrane Patrick are members, and to which all are giving valuable assistance. The Department hope shortly to have the assistance of the Report of the Committee. I shall not indulge in a peroration, but simply content myself with this brief statement.

Mr. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox): I do not know how far it is expedient to crush the discussion upon such an important a Vote as this into the space of half-an-hour. If, however, Scotch Members generally are agreeable that the Vote should be passed at this Sitting, I shall do nothing to prevent the attainment of such an end. Now, as to the general result, as stated in the Report of the Department, I find that the number of students presented in Standard V. has increased by 8·21 per cent; but let me point out that this increase is not due to the fact that the age has been raised to 14 years, and that employment under 14 years of age is prohibited unless Standard V. is passed. It is well this should be borne in mind, because we are apt to attribute this increase to an improvement in the educational machinery. With regard to school attendance, I may point out to the Department that we have no information whatever regarding the number of children who are attending other than State-aided schools. I believe that every school board has got information not merely as to the attendance at their own schools, but as to the attendance at other schools. Probably the reason for not giving this information has been that in consequence of the information the Scotch Education Department has been enabled to give a most unfair representation of the progress of education. The right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate has not been free from such a tendency in his remarks to-day. He told us, for instance, that the school accommodation in Scotland in 1873 was only 274,000, and that it is now 701,000, thus making it appear as if this accommodation had been the result of increased accommodation being provided which did not exist before, forgetting altogether that the state of matters was that at the former period there was only a limited number of State-aided schools. In point of fact, according to the Census Returns of 1871, there were 541,000 children receiving instruction in Scotland, which shows the fallacy of drawing a comparison between the State-aided schools in 1873 and State-aided schools now. If the Department will tell us the total number of children at school in 1873, and the total number of children at school now, we should know the difference—instead of it being about 120 per cent, as they try to make out, we should find that the percentage of the population between five and 13 years of age at the Census of 1871, compared with the number at the Census of 1881, showed only an increase of percentage of population and attendance at school of 9·21. The reason why the Scotch Education Department do not furnish us with the full details of the children attending not merely State-aided, but all schools, is that they would otherwise never be able to continue the fallacy which they have carried out for a great many years in their Report. Another Return which we wish to have is that of the ages at which the different children passed the Standards. For instance, if we find that there are children attending school in Standard I. who are 12 years of age, I think that something is wrong. The Glasgow School Board give the ages of the children in the different Standards. The Department have got the materials, out of which they can give the ages, for I believe the school boards make up every three years a statement of the ages at which the children pass the different Standards. Then, in regard to the school accommodation, it has been pointed out by the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate that there is accommodation for 701,598 children; but I find that the average attendance is only 483,996, so that apparently there is a large surplus of accommodation in Scotland. Now, the Department seem to point out that there ought to be a very large increase of attendance — that there ought to be as many as 173,000 more at school. It may seem a paradox, but it is nevertheless true, that there is far too much attendance at Scottish schools from one aspect of the matter—that is, for the amount of educational work that is done. For instance, in order to pass Standard V., which means six years' attendance at school, any child who makes 125 whole attendances will be able to pass one Standard each year, which Standard is below the average capacity of children. Now, the total number of children in Scotland who have been at school for six years—that is, children between six and 12 years, which will represent the number who have been at school for six years—is 466,440, and we find that there are other children in Standard VI. to the number of 33,826; in other words, if these 500,000 children are at school in Scotland, we should expect that they will give an attendance of six years, and every one of these children ought to be able, at the end of six years, to pass Standard V. What would be the result? That in Standard V. we should have passing every year 73,000 children out of a roll of 500,000, instead of which we have a very high roll of attendance in Scotland, but we have only 55,000 passing Standard V. It is not the number of the children or the attendance that I complain of, but the question is whether we are getting proper educational results. It is a mistake to suppose that by driving children into school we are thereby promoting education. It may be the very reverse. If we make the curriculum extend over seven years instead of six, if we are neglectful, and make it take a year longer to pass a child in Standard V., as a matter of course we increase the attendance by one-sixth, but this additional attendance is not a beneficial increase. Then with regard to secondary education. We are told now that secondary education is not in a very satisfactory state in Scotland. For a long time this was not admitted by the Department. We are told that there are 7,443 pupils in one subject, but what kind of education do they get? Only 894 passed in the third stage, which is the only stage that will be of the least use to them. In the same way with French; 5,154 got a smattering of French, but only 412 passed that stage. Then in regard to class subjects. I think it would be a great advantage if we could do away with the individual examination. We have done away with that in Standard V. For instance, in Glasgow we were in a very awkward position in regard to the children. According to the Code, 250 attendances at one school were necessary before a child could go for examination. In Glasgow the flitting term is in May, and the examination of scholars was in the autumn, and we found that a child, through its parents removing from one district to another, was not able to make the recognized attendances at one school, and could not pass the proper Standard, and was kept for another year in that Standard. There is another point worthy of notice. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools—Inspector Kerr—had other appointments besides that of Chief Inspector, for which he draws £900 a-year; but I do not find in the Estimates any notice of the emoluments for these other appointments. I believe that Mr. Kerr is also Inspector of some of the Educational Endowment Schools, and is doing work in that direction. I think it unfortunate that the Inspector of Elementary Schools should have anything to do with the secondary schools, because he will thereby be carrying the same system of examination into operation. It is unfair that any Inspector who gets £900 a-year for devoting his whole attention to that work—and there is plenty of work to be done in the case of Glasgow—should devote his attention to other matters, and receive salaries for the other duties he performs. I do not wish to detain the Committee any longer; but the question of education is one of very great interest to the people of Scotland, especially in view of the fact that we have a Commission of Inquiry sitting on the part of the Department regarding secondary education. I think that instead of the present Commission we ought to have a Commission composed of Members of this House, so that we could have an impartial investigation. Such a Commission is sitting for England, and I doubt not it will be of the greatest benefit to English education. We in Scotland have as much need for such a Commission; indeed, the Department have admitted the fact by appointing a Commission themselves. Unfortunately, the inquiry at present taking place is not an impartial one; it is totally under the control of the Scotch Education Department, and can only tend to drive everything into the hands of school boards.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): There can be no question that this is one of the most important questions which Scotch Members have to consider. We are very interested in the subject of national education, especially so since its control has been transferred to the Scotch Department. The reason I rise at this juncture, however, is because I am the only Scotch Member who did not wish to make a speech upon this Vote. I think that, on behalf of my hon. Friends who have remained in the House the whole day for the purpose of expressing their views and criticizing the speech of the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate, it is not too much to ask the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) to acknowledge that it is not at all fair to press on this Vote to-day, and that it is absolutely necessary that some further opportunity should be allowed for the discussion of this very important subject. I make that appeal, because it is not a very pleasant practice, and one which Scotch Members do not very often indulge in, to talk out an Estimate of this kind. It is, however, quite evident that if any single Member wishes to insist upon the right to discuss this Vote at greater length, nothing can be easier than to talk it out. I do not want to do that, and I am sure the right hon. Gentleman will admit the reasonableness of my appeal.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I admit the reasonableness of the appeal with only one reservation, which is that the Vote has been taken at the request of Scotch Members. [*Cries of* "No, no!"]

MR. J. H. A. MACDONALD: It was started at their suggestion. [*Cries of* "No, no!"]

MR. W. H. SMITH: I understood it was so; and I at once deferred to their wishes. But there can be no doubt that if it is the wish of hon. Gentlemen from Scotland to discuss this Vote at greater length, they are fully entitled to do so. The Government will agree to a postponement of the Vote, but it will not be in my power to put it down for an early day next week, as the first days next week are already pledged. But I will put the Vote down on the earliest possible day afterwards, and then I hope hon. Gentlemen will be in a position to take advantage of it. I presume, however, that hon. Gentleman are prepared to take the responsibility of the postponement of the Vote.

MR. MARJORIBANKS (Berwickshire): I did appeal to English Members to stop the discussion of their Vote in order that the Scotch Vote might be taken this afternoon. I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for the College Division of Glasgow (Dr. Cameron) that we are entitled to a much longer time to discuss the Vote than that now at our disposal; but for my part, considering the time of the Session, I think Scotch Members might waive their claim. If they do so, however, it will be purely a matter of favour to the Government.

Dr. R. MACDONALD (Ross and Cromarty): The right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate has said that the special grant for Gaelic is not taken much advantage of in the Highlands. I should like to ask him whether a scheme has been formulated for examination in Gaelic, or whether it is not the case that Inspectors have refused to examine children in that language, because they say that no scheme has been prepared according to which they can examine the children, although they may have been prepared for the examination?

Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD: I believe a scheme has been prepared for these examinations. I did not say that nothing had been done, but that I was disappointed at the extent to which the special grant has been taken advantage of.

Dr. R. MACDONALD: I can give the names of the schools at which Inspectors have refused to examine children in Gaelic.

Dr. CAMERON: Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman utilize the time remaining to us in answering the Question I have put to him some time ago—namely, Whether he will take care that the grant in respect of half-timers is equalized in Scotland to what it is in England?

Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD: I will consider the point, but I cannot give any pledge.

Dr. CAMERON: Mr. Courtney, I beg to move that you do report Progress.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again,"—(*Dr. Cameron,*) put, and *agreed to.*

Resolution to be reported upon *Monday* next.

Committee also report Progress; to sit again upon *Monday* next.

Mr. Marjoribanks

QUESTIONS.

——o——

LAW AND JUSTICE—THE CONDEMNED CONVICT LIPSKI.

Sir HENRY TYLER (Great Yarmouth) said, he wished before the House rose to ask a Question of the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary (Mr. Matthews) in regard to the miserable criminal Lipski, who was to be executed on Monday morning. He saw from the newspapers that the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary had sent a communication to Mr. Hayward, the convict's solicitor, stating that he had carefully considered all the circumstances of the case, and that he could not discover any sufficient ground to justify him in advising that the law should not take its course. He desired to know whether, before he communicated that statement to Mr. Hayward, the right hon. Gentleman had seen Mr. Hayward and had heard all he had to advance as to his belief in Lipski's innocence; and whether he had seen and fully consulted the learned Judge (Mr. Justice Stephen) before whom Lipski was tried? He would also ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he would grant one week's respite—as there seemed to be considerable doubt and difficulty in the case—in order that further inquiries might be made, and further consideration given to it?

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): I am obliged to my hon. Friend for giving me an opportunity of making a statement in public on this matter. Before announcing to the officers who had charge of Lipski that I was unable to advise Her Majesty to interfere at all with the sentence, I had not seen Mr. Hayward myself, but I had had a prolonged interview of more than two hours with Mr. Justice Stephen, who had recently seen Mr. Hayward and heard all he had to allege; and we discussed in common all that the learned Judge had gathered from Mr. Hayward. Since I have been in the House to-day I have learnt that an account of what passed at the interview between Mr. Justice Stephen and Mr. Hayward had appeared in print; and I wish to say that I have heard from Mr. Justice Stephen this afternoon that such statements in the public Press are partly exaggerated, partly false, and altogether irrelevant to the inference drawn. He further informs me that he is in no degree dissatisfied, either with the verdict or with my decision. And, again, he says—

> "I did not at the time feel so clear and strong in my opinion as you did, but your decision has not surprised me nor given me the least uneasiness."

Therefore, in what I have done, I hope my hon. Friend will see that I have acted in entire accord with the learned Judge. Perhaps I may add that Mr. Hayward never asked to see me till about three-quarters of an hour ago, and I have been in interview with him ever since, and I am now about to return to continue the interview. I need not say that in a case of this sort my mind will be kept open to listen to and give the fullest weight to everything which can be urged on behalf of the unhappy man. May I also say that, before I saw Mr. Hayward, I had read the printed statement which he had issued on behalf of the convict, and had considered every line of it with the most anxious care.

Sir HENRY TYLER: The right hon. Gentleman has not answered the last part of my Question, as to whether he will grant a respite for a week for further inquiry?

Mr. MATTHEWS: I can give no answer to that.

Mr. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.W.) asked whether the right hon. Gentleman had clearly considered that all the evidence in this case was given in an almost incomprehensible jargon compounded of Hebrew, Polish, and German?

Mr. MATTHEWS: Certainly, I have considered that.

MOTION.

DISTRICT LUNATIC ASYLUMS (IRELAND) OFFICERS' SUPERANNUATION BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Johnston, Bill to alter and amend the provisions for Superannuating Officers and Servants of District Lunatic Asylums in Ireland, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Johnston and Mr. Chance.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 375.]

House adjourned at one minute
before Six o'clock till
Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, 15th August, 1887.

MINUTES.]—Public Bills—*First Reading*—Conveyancing (Scotland) Acts Amendment * (233); Public Works Loans * (234); Women's Suffrage (No. 2) * (236).

Second Reading — *Bill withdrawn* — Boiler Registry and Inspection (229).

Committee — *Report* — Metropolitan Board of Works (Money) * (226); Deeds of Arrangement (No. 2) (230).

Third Reading—Truck (232); Licensed Premises (Earlier Closing) (Scotland) (223), and *passed.*

BOILER REGISTRY AND INSPECTION BILL.—(No. 229.)

(*The Lord Stanley of Preston.*)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Lord Stanley of Preston), in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, that he did not propose to proceed further with the measure this year, his sole object at present being to ask the House to affirm the principle of the Bill, in order that its provisions might, during the Recess, have the advantage of being before the public and be subjected to the searching criticism which he hoped it would receive. The Government might thus, perhaps, get the means of ascertaining what was the general feeling on the subject, and how far they could deal with this matter at all. If the Bill were now read a second time he hoped next Session to move for the appointment of a Select Committee of their Lordships' House in order that the subject might be thoroughly examined. It would, perhaps, be convenient if he were to mention how the law stood at present with regard to this matter. Something like 20 years ago attention was drawn to this matter. In 1870 a Select Committee of the House of Commons had been appointed which went very carefully into the matter and reported in 1871. They expressed a doubt whether compulsory inspection was then advisable, and held that the steam-user was responsible for the efficiency of the boiler. In 1882 an Act was passed by which it became the duty of the Board of Trade to appoint competent engineers to investigate all cases of boiler explosion, whether attended by loss of life or not. It was only, therefore, in the last five years that the Board of Trade had had officially submitted to them the task of inquiring into these explosions. The Reports of the Inspectors had been laid before both Houses of Parliament. His attention had been called to the subject especially by the Report of the Assistant Secretary under the Act, who had pointed out that the term "accident" as applied to many steam boiler explosions was a misnomer, and the only thing accidental about them was that the boilers had remained so long without exploding. Although he did not say that foreign countries should necessarily form a rule for ourselves, at the same time foreign countries for the most part insisted upon the inspection of boilers. What were the principal causes of the evils of which he had been speaking? They were, first of all, weak or defective designs in the first instance; secondly, bad condition, owing to deterioration; thirdly, want of proper inspection; fourthly, want of proper fittings; and, fifthly, undue working pressure. Another cause which could only partially be dealt with was ignorance or neglect on the part of the attendant. Since the time of the Report to which he had referred there had been a very great and remarkable increase in the use of steam by small owners. Steam was used in farms, as assistance to many minor manufactures, such as in carpenters' shops. Boilers, in fact, were used for purposes far in excess of those for which they had been used 20 years before. They were placed in closely crowded streets, with only a thin board in many instances between them and the crowd. There was a still growing increase caused by the use of dynamos for producing electric light; and engines were placed for different purposes in all sorts of positions, upon the tops of high scaffolds, &c., and they were often used by persons who were but little conversant with the dangers to be apprehended. With regard to what was the system in foreign countries—in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, and Holland—boilers were subjected to periodical inspection. In Austria, France, and Germany the inspection was made partly by Government officials, and partly by the officials of private associations; while in Denmark and Holland it was made by Government officials. In Italy only railway boilers—with which this measure did not propose to deal—were inspected. There was also an official inspection of boilers in many of the Colonies. In New Zealand there was a Government inspection; and in several of the States of the United States there was an inspection conducted by the Governments of the separate States. He mentioned this in order to show that it was a fallacy to suppose that the State inspection of boilers acted as a check upon trade. In this country there was a system of inspection by companies or private associations, some of them formed for the purpose of inspection only, some combining inspection and insurance. It was therefore impossible to ascertain with anything approaching to accuracy the number of boilers there were in this country. The number was estimated at from 115,000 up to 140,000, or even 150,000, and as far as he could ascertain about 70,000, or perhaps 50 per cent, were under inspection already. The Bill which he now submitted to their Lordships did not seek to provide for Government inspection, but to endeavour to make use of and to extend the benefits of the existing inspection associations. It was proposed that certain rules should be laid down by a central authority under which the inspections were to be conducted. It was not, however, possible wholly to rely upon the natural interest of the owner to insure. He (Lord Stanley of Preston) had placed himself in communication with most of those interested in the matter. The Mechanical Engineers' Institute of Civil Engineers, the Boiler Makers, Boiler Users, and the Boiler Inspecting Societies, and he was bound to recognize the very cordial help and assistance which he had received on all hands; the result was, he felt able to propose that the Board of Trade, acting as the central authority, should be assisted by a committee of experts gathered from all these different interests upon whose advice the Board of Trade should endeavour to act in framing its rules. Practically speaking, there was no such thing as accidents; and he was persuaded that the present lamentable loss of life from boiler explosions arose mainly from causes which could be foreseen, and, in almost every case, prevented; and the object of the Bill was, as far as possible, to remove those causes. It was said that accidents could not be entirely prevented, no matter what precautions were taken. This was, no doubt, true; but, nevertheless, every attempt ought to be made to lessen accidents by requiring that employers should take every reasonable means of carrying on their business safely. In addition to evils which he had enumerated there was neglect on the part of those who tended boilers, and in certain cases the present Bill proposed to make that neglect criminal. It required that employers should take reasonable means for carrying on their business safely, gave increased protection to the owner, increased safety to the workmen, and an increased measure of security to the general public, who sometimes suffered from these boiler explosions. Though introduced by him as a Member of the Government, his Colleagues were not answerable for its details, nor even for all its principles. He had, however, closely inquired into this subject, and was firmly persuaded that a strong case for interference had been made out, and he hoped that their Lordships would give the Bill a second reading with a view to its being proceeded with next Session. The 2nd clause of the Bill provided that all boilers should be registered—new boilers when they were made, and every boiler now in use within three months after the passing of the Act. The necessity for registration arose from the fact that in almost all these explosions it was impossible to trace the age or previous history of the boiler. In many cases it appeared that the boiler had been bought second-hand, its age being unknown either to the seller or buyer, and the difficulty of establishing the responsibility of the employer was in consequence greatly increased. Clause 5 attempted to fix a little more closely than at present the responsibility in case of an explosion by providing that the owner might by an instrument in writing nominate some competent person to superintend, and who would be responsible for, the working of the boiler. Clause 6 provided that a boiler should not be used unless certificated. The 7th clause dealt with the constitution of the Committee which was to assist the Board of Trade in framing rules, and upon whose advice the Board of Trade would act. Such Committee would be composed of one representative of Lloyd's, two from the Institution of Civil Engineers, two from the Mechanical Engineers, three gentlemen representing the Improved Boilers Company, three representing the Boiler Makers Society and other persons in the boiler trade, and four representing the general users of steam boilers. There were no means of forming a constituency to elect these gentlemen, and they would be selected from the names submitted to the Board of Trade. Clause 8 provided for surveys by surveyors acting on behalf of any society, company, or body whose rules were approved of by the Board of Trade, assisted by the committee of experts. Clause 11 made it a misdemeanour on the part of any surveyor to receive any fee or remuneration other than that sanctioned by the rules of the body appointing him, also for making any false declaration, and by Clause 12 any person who knowingly made, or caused to be made, any false statement or concealed any necessary information, or who forged or fraudulently gave a certificate, would be penally dealt with. Clause 14 imposed a penalty on the use of undue pressure on boilers. The certificate would contain the pressure to be used, and it was deemed necessary to deal with the common practice of working boilers far beyond the pressure they were designed to bear. By the 24th clause, the Bill was to apply—with certain exceptions—to every boiler in the United Kingdom, on land or afloat, within the territorial waters, the latter provision being necessary to take in steam launches and tugs, which did not come under marine inspection. Ships were exempted which were already classed at Lloyd's, and boilers used by Railway Companies were also exempted. There was practically no case against the Railway Companies, whose system of inspection was thorough, scientific, and complete. Neither did the Bill deal with domestic boilers. He had now laid before their Lordships the principal provisions of the Bill. He asked not that it should be passed into law this Session, but only that it should receive a very searching investigation at the hands of a Select Committee of their Lordships' House. We had a great and, he believed, a growing evil to contend with. He earnestly hoped that while acting by all right and legitimate means and without any inquisitorial investigations or anything which was in any degree in restriction of trade, their Lordships would, nevertheless, so far assert the principles he had endeavoured to propound as to give this Bill *pro formâ* a second reading. As he had said, he did not propose to proceed with it further this year, but he hoped what he had said would show their Lordships what a great evil existed and what dangers could be avoided. In conclusion, he begged to move the second reading of the Bill.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Lord Stanley of Preston.*)

The Earl of WEMYSS said, there were one or two points on which he thought his noble Friend had failed to give information. He did not dispute that it was the duty of the State to interfere when such interference was beneficial for the saving of life and limb. The question was whether legislation in this direction had always been successful. His noble Friend had told them that there were 150,000 boilers of all kinds in the United Kingdom. Did he include in that number all farm engines? Did he include kitchen boilers?

Lord STANLEY of PRESTON: No.

The Earl of WEMYSS: But accidents occurred through kitchen boilers as well as other boilers. He wanted to know why, if the principle of the Bill were sound, it should not be extended to kitchen boilers? Then his noble Friend had not stated the number of deaths occasioned by the bursting of boilers that had induced the Government to bring in this Bill. His noble Friend told them that already we had in this country, by voluntary inspection, something like 70,000 boilers inspected out of the 150,000. His noble Friend likewise mentioned that State inspection, existed in other countries. He should have been glad if his noble Friend had shown the relative number of accidents in those countries as compared with this country. These were valuable *data* which they ought to have. He should also like to know how many inspectors would be appointed under this Bill, what would be the cost of inspection, and who would bear the cost? Would it come out of the local rates or out of the Consolidated Fund, or out of the pockets of the persons who owned the boilers? This was a Bill to enable the State to step in and do what individuals had hitherto done for themselves.

Lord BRAMWELL said, that as the noble Lord had not troubled the House with the statistics of the disasters which had happened, and as he was not going further with the Bill, he did not understand that their Lordships, by assenting to the second reading, would be affirming its principle in any way. Their Lordships were in total ignorance of the extent of the mischief intended to be removed; he, however, confessed he had a perfect horror of inspectors, who would have their own particular views up to which boiler makers would be acting, instead of, as at present, looking only to the improvement of boilers. In the circumstances he would not oppose the second reading of the Bill.

Lord STANLEY of PRESTON said, the number of cases which the Board of Trade had to deal with by Statute did not include collieries and mines, but he should hereafter propose that these be included. Apart from them there were 223 cases in five years, and 150 lives lost, or a yearly average of 44 cases and 30 lives. He could not at present state what was the percentage with regard to population in the inspected countries. But he would do his best to obtain information on the subject. As regards our own country there were on board uncertificated ships which were not inspected by the Board of Trade 35 casualties and 54 lives lost in 10 years, while in the corresponding class of certificated ships there were only seven casualties and only 19 lives lost. The noble and learned Lord opposite hoped that by assenting to the second reading their Lordships would not be understood to affirm the principle of the Bill. He admitted that many matters both of principle and of detail might be objectionable. All he asked was that it should be understood that their Lordships, by assenting to the second reading, would only commit themselves to an inquiry upon the subject, which inquiry would, he hoped, be followed by legislation.

The Earl of WEMYSS: Does the inspection extend to Her Majesty's ships?

LORD STANLEY OF PRESTON: Certainly not.

Motion *agreed to;* Bill read 2^a accordingly.

Bill (by leave of the House) *withdrawn.*

TRUCK BILL.—(No. 232.)

(*The Lord Macnaghten.*)

THIRD READING.

Order of the Day for the Third Reading read.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 3^a."—(*The Lord Macnaghten.*)

LORD BRAMWELL said, he could not allow this stage of the Bill to pass without a protest. There was a difference of opinion between the Lord Chancellor and the noble and learned Lord who had charge of the Bill on the one hand, and himself on the other, as to the construction of Clause 3. If the opinion of his noble and learned Friends were correct, the clause interfered with freedom of contract, and for that interference not a reason had been given nor argument advanced.

Motion *agreed to;* Bill read 3^a accordingly, with the Amendments; a further Amendment made; Bill *passed*, and sent to the Commons; and to be *printed* as amended. (No. 235.)

LICENSED PREMISES (EARLIER CLOSING) (SCOTLAND) BILL.—(No. 213.)

(*The Earl of Camperdown.*)

THIRD READING.

Bill read 3^a (according to order), with the Amendments.

On Question, "That the Bill do pass?"

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN said, he would move to amend Clause 4 by omitting from the Bill certain words which he asked the House to insert in Committee, giving the magistrate, as the licensing authority, discretionary power in the matter of closing public-houses not earlier than 10 o'clock or later than 11 o'clock at night. He thought it only right to state the circumstances in which the Bill was when he consented to make the alteration. When the Bill was introduced into their Lordships' House it proposed that all public-houses in Scotland should close at 10 o'clock. He had the advantage of hearing what could be said for and against the measure by noble Lords on the second reading, and ultimately he succeeded in devising an arrangement which appeared to him to be a fair compromise of the question. He gave Notice, after the second reading, of his intention to introduce an Amendment to the effect stated. No intimation was given by his noble Friend on the Cross Benches (the Earl of Wemyss) as to what he intended doing. When they came to the Committee stage no Amendment was put down, but he obtained the insertion of the Amendment which he now proposed should be struck out. When they came to the Report stage his noble Friend put down an Amendment excluding from the operation of the Bill towns with a population of 50,000 and upwards, which virtually operated as a second limitation to the Bill. The Amendment was inserted, and he had to ask their Lordships to dispense with the arrangement which he had proposed. Their Lordships would see what his grievance was. Had the Amendment of his noble Friend appeared side by side with his own he should not have moved his own, for the reason that it appeared to him a second limitation of the measure. That second limitation was one which he could not accept, and under those circumstances he had to ask their Lordships to allow the removal from the Bill of his Amendment.

Amendment *moved*,

To leave out the words ("such hour at night of any day not earlier than ten and not later than eleven, as the licensing authority may direct") and insert instead thereof ("ten of the clock at night of any day").—(*The Earl of Camperdown.*)

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (The Marquess of LOTHIAN) said, what the noble Earl had stated was perfectly true; and he thought the course which the noble Earl adopted in Committee was accepted by their Lordships as a compromise on the Bill as it came up to this House. He (the Marquess of Lothian) accepted the Bill on the second reading, but with the reservation that he would support the Amendment which the noble Earl on the Cross Benches (the Earl of Wemyss) had stated he would give Notice of.

The Earl of CAMPERDOWN: He did not give Notice.

The Marquess of LOTHIAN said, he thought the question did not admit of much doubt. When he accepted the noble Earl's Amendment he did so under reservation that he should accept it accompanied by the Amendment of which the noble Earl on the Cross Benches gave Notice. He thought it was a pity that the noble Earl on the Cross Benches did not put down his Amendment for the Committee, so that their Lordships might have had an opportunity of considering them both together. He regretted that the noble Earl (the Earl of Camperdown) now asked to withdraw his Amendment; for he quite agreed with him that it was a compromise. But he could not agree with him that the exemption of the towns with over 50,000 inhabitants took away from the effect of that compromise. It seemed to him that that compromise was an exceedingly valuable one, and it was as valuable in principle now as it was before. The exemption of these towns did not affect the principle, as it would be applied to the rest of the country; and he thought that with regard to many of the towns under 50,000 inhabitants the noble Earl's Amendment would be valuable. On the West Coast, for example, there were certain towns where it would be very desirable for certain periods of the year that licensed premises should be open till after 10 o'clock, although, in other periods of the year, 10 o'clock would be late enough. If the noble Earl's (the Earl of Camperdown's) Amendment was withdrawn, there would be a hard-and-fast line throughout the whole of Scotland for closing at 10 o'clock, except in the towns of over 50,000. He did not think the noble Earl had given a sufficient reason to induce them to allow the Amendment to be withdrawn.

The Earl of GALLOWAY wished to say one word at this moment, especially in connection with the vote he gave on the Report stage. He then voted with his noble Friend opposite, and for once he was opposed to his noble Friend on the Cross Benches. He took the Bill as it then was, and he saw that it enacted that the licensing authorities in every district, whether county or burgh, should determine themselves what the hour of closing should be—whether it should be 10 or 11 o'clock. He could not see, therefore, why his noble Friend on the Cross Benches should think it necessary to enforce the hour of 11 in all towns of over 50,000 inhabitants. Therefore, by his vote he desired to put every district of Scotland under the jurisdiction of this particular licensing authority. Having supported his noble Friend opposite on that occasion when he wanted to have the hour in each district governed by local authority, the noble Earl in this, the last stage, asked to upset that arrangement. Therefore, though he supported him on the last occasion, he should feel it his duty to vote against him on this occasion, because he proposed now to alter his own honestly reforming clause.

Amendment *negatived.*

On the Motion of The Earl of Wemyss, the following Schedule of towns, with their adjacent suburbs in some places, as the towns to be exempted, were inserted:—Edinburgh, Glasgow, including Crosshill; Kinning Park, Pollockshields, Pollockshields East, Govan, Govanhill, Hillhead, Maryhill, Partick, Greenock, including Gourock; Leith, Aberdeen, Dundee, Paisley.

The Earl of CAMPERDOWN said, after the action their Lordships had taken, he did not propose to make any further Motion with regard to this Bill. As he had already stated to their Lordships, he proposed for their consideration an arrangement which appeared to him to be a very reasonable and fair compromise. That, unfortunately, had not commended itself to their Lordships. Another Amendment had been introduced, which, as he said on the second reading, had given a further limitation to the Bill. It went very much further. It absolutely excluded from the provisions of the Bill the chief towns. An Amendment to the same effect was introduced in the other House; but it was disagreed to by a very large majority of the Scotch Members; and, in the circumstances, he did not propose to make any further Motion on the Bill.

The Earl of WEMYSS said, he must express his regret that his noble Friend should have thought it necessary to have practically withdrawn his Bill, because, upon the whole, he thought it very desirable that the measure should not be allowed to drop. At first he was under the impression that the Bill should not have been brought forward at all; but that the promoters should have waited until the Government produced their measure on the whole subject of local government, whenever that might be. Now, he considered that the Bill, as it stood, was a fair compromise; and, in spite of what his noble Friend had said, he believed that it might have worked practically, and, at all events, it would have been a test Bill with regard to the discretionary power of licensing within the certain limits fixed in the measure. It would thus have been exceedingly useful as preparatory to a general measure. He could not but express his great regret that his noble Friend should consider it necessary practically to withdraw the Bill. He desired to know whether the Government intended to take any action with regard to the Bill which was now, in consequence of the course pursued by his noble Friend, in a condition of suspense?

THE MARQUESS OF LOTHIAN said, he thought that the course pursued by the noble Earl (the Earl of Camperdown) was not a very desirable one, and he should like a little time to consider what course, under the circumstances, should be adopted. He therefore did not propose at the present time to take any action with regard to the Bill, but would leave it at its present stage. The Bill would consequently still appear among the Orders of the Day.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN said, he thought the House had some right to insist on a more specific answer as to the intention of the Government. He would appeal to the noble Marquess at the head of the Government for a more definite statement. The proposition of the Bill was perfectly simple, and he thought the noble Marquess ought to give them some definite information on the point. He thought they would admit that they had not much leading from the noble Marquess up to very nearly the last stage of the Bill, and he thought at the point which they had now reached they ought to be told what the Government intended to do.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of SALISBURY): I have been educated in the careful school of the noble Earl opposite (Earl Granville), which enjoins a Minister never to give an answer to a Question without Notice, and I am afraid on this occasion I must ask time to consider.

Question, "That the Bill do pass," to be put *To-morrow*.

SOCIALISM—RECENT LEGISLATION.

OBSERVATIONS.

THE EARL OF WEMYSS, in rising to call attention to Socialistic legislation during the Sessions 1886-7, said, that two years ago he had brought before their Lordships the legislation of the preceding 15 years, and last year he had given Notice that he should bring to the attention of the House the Socialistic legislation of the Session. But he had been unable to do so in consequence of the untimely close of the Session. He was bringing forward this question because the Upas tree of Socialism, planted by Mr. Gladstone in 1870 in Ireland, was now overshadowing our land, and attracting every kind of bird of prey to roost in its branches. We were now going rapidly down the road without any kind of drag or check. He had entertained some hope that his noble Friends on the Government Bench would have acted as a drag upon proposals of this character. But whether it was the necessities of the political situation, or, as the noble Marquess had confessed with cynical candour, the necessity of buying the Ulster vote, Conservatism nowadays appeared to be nothing but the fifth wheel in the Socialistic coach. He could not but admire his noble Friend's foreign policy; but with respect to home affairs he was afraid that the whip and the reins were in other hands. We had now, in fact, the rivalry between the two Parties in the promotion of measures of this character, which had been predicted by the late Professor Fawcett. Now, what was Socialism? It was difficult to define, and the eminent Belgian economist, M. de Laveleye, had said that there was no such thing as a definition of Socialism. He himself, two years ago, had divided Socialism into three classes—first, the Socialism of the streets; secondly, the Socialism of the professors; and, thirdly, the Socialism of the statesman and of the Senate. In this country, happily, we had little to fear from the Socialism of the streets; and, as to the professors, the mass of the people shared in the healthy contempt expressed for that class of men by

Prince Bismarck. It was also worthy of notice that however free the professors might be in respect of the property of others, they were careful enough to preserve their own, for in their published writings there was printed on the title-page, "All rights reserved." As he said, the real danger lay in the competition of statesmen to produce measures in curtailment of individual liberty, and in the direction of the confiscation of property. That sort of legislation was, of course, brought forward under pretext of protecting the weak against the strong. The first principle of legislation ought to be to support the weak, to maintain obedience to the law, and to enforce payment of just debts. But that was not the policy of the day. The policy of the day was nominally to protect the weak; but it was really a truckling and "cottoning" to the strong—a truckling to the Saxon with his vote, and to the Irish tenant with his gun. The legislation of the present day was, as had been said of Providence, always on the side of the big battalions. There was a marked contrast between the Socialism of foreign countries and the Socialism of England. Foreign Socialists theorized, held meetings, and passed resolutions, but they practically had no influence on the legislation of their different countries. But, in England, the resolutions passed by the great congresses of trade unions and kindred gatherings of working men were very soon embodied in legislation. He recollected putting a leading question on this subject some years ago to the German Ambassador, Count Münster, and asking him whether it was not the opinion on the Continent that England would be the first country in which Socialism would become the law of the land, and his answer was—"Oh, yes; on the Continent we all think and say so." Since that time the progress on the Socialistic slide in the matter of legislation had been rapid. Think of the state of things in 1870. Lord Palmerston, who said that tenant right was landlord wrong, was dead only a few years. There was no question in 1870 of the three F's; contracts were free and as sacred as the Church was considered to be down to pre-Gladstonian times. But nowadays in almost all Bills contract was interfered with. Hardly an Act of Parliament passed that did not contain those words that so-and-so should be law, "all contracts to the contrary notwithstanding;" and when they came to the legislation with regard to land in Ireland and in the North of Scotland, they would suppose that the Bills were of such a character that they must have been drafted by a new Parliamentary firm, formed of Jack Sheppard, Dick Turpin, and Barabbas, under the guidance and the authority of the Unjust Steward. As in that parable of the Unjust Steward, the Irish tenant was asked, "How much owest thou?" "£100." "Then take the Land Bill, and sit down quickly, and write £50." Now he held in his hand a list of the Bills which had been introduced of late years. He did not say that some of those measures were not more or less harmless, unobjectionable, or even, perhaps, desirable. But they all proceeded on the principle of the State legislating for everybody in everything, interfering with trade, commerce, and manufactures, forbidding contracts, or prescribing contracts, and, in fact, embodying proposals which 25 years ago no man in his senses would have dreamed of proposing. Both Conservatives and Liberals had had their fair share in this kind of legislation. Of measures dealing with lands and houses, mines, railways, ships, manufactures, the trade in alcohol, education, recreation, he found that there were, between 1870 and 1874, 27 Acts, between 1875 and 1879 there were two less, while between 1880 and 1884 there were 40. In 1885 there were 26 Bills of a Socialistic character; in 1886 there were 53 Bills and five Acts, and in 1887 the number rose to 107, of which 44 were backed by Conservatives, and 63 by Liberals. Of Bills affecting lands and houses there were 39, of which 12 were Conservative and 27 Liberal. They were told that the great solution of the Irish Question was the abolition of dual ownership, but in point of fact, from 1870 downwards, they had been doing their best to create dual ownership. There was an Agricultural Holdings Bill brought in by the Liberals by means of which the tenant, in defiance of his contract, was to be entitled in certain circumstances to a reduction of rent. Again, there was an Agricultural Labourers' (Wages) Bill, prohibiting the wages of the labourer being paid in beer, cider, or alcoholic drinks; and then there was a Leasehold Enfranchisement Bill brought in by Conservatives, giving a lessee the right of purchasing the freehold by compulsion, any agreement to the contrary notwithstanding. Then there was a Bill before Parliament proscribing what the royalties were to be which the owner of a mine was to exact, and either by that Bill or another one, where the owner did not work his property, but left it dormant, which might be the best thing for him to do, he was to be compelled to lease or work it. Then there was a delightful Bill called the Rod Fishing Bill—a Liberal Bill—very Liberal, for it gave the public unrestricted access along the banks of all streams and lochs in Scotland, except where there was a riparian garden not exceeding 10 acres in extent, to allow them to fish with rod and line for any fish except salmon. Not only did the Bill contain this provision, but there was also a clause by which, unless the owner provided a pathway, he was to have no compensation for damages to crops or fences. Then there was the Agricultural Labourers' Holidays Bill, which was worse than the Plantagenets, because, if they prescribed what wages should be, they prescribed that a man should work for those wages; but this Bill prescribed wages to be paid for days on which no work was to be done. The Crofters Act, again, introduced by a Conservative Government, contained two new principles, which were not to be found even in the Irish Land Bill—namely, the doing away with debt in the shape of arrears; and, secondly, the compulsory leasing of land. The unpractical character of the Waste Land Compulsory Cultivation Bill was shown in its very title; the land was at present waste, and if it was cultivated, it must be cultivated at somebody's loss, either that of the ratepayer or the individual. If there had been a possibility of the land paying, it would have been cultivated long ago. The Allotments Bill meant the compulsory taking of private property at the cost of the rates, as a bribe to the agricultural voters. In that Bill they had laid down some things which went much further than ever had been dreamed of before, and he could not believe that his noble and learned Friend the Lord Chancellor could have seen this Bill, which empowered land to be bought for allotments, not only for the agricultural labourers, but for the suburban population as well, living on the outskirts of a town, who were now to be found gardens at the expense of the rates. If it was necessary for anyone to have gardens, it was for those who lived in the heart of a city. All this legislation was ridiculous, absurd, impracticable, and most extravagant; and he did not know from which side of the House the worst measures came. There was the Coal Mines Regulation Bill, which prescribed that bandages and stretchers should be kept where there were a certain number of workmen, and that where there were fewer it should not be necessary. This Bill would lessen the sense of personal responsibility among mineowners. Then the Railway and Canal Traffic Bill was a retrospective measure, which took away rights in a manner which would be impossible under the American Constitution. Whatever they went in for in that way of business always had to be supplemented by further legislation. Sir John Lubbock's Early Closing Bill was the first attempt on the part of Parliament to prescribe the hours during which full-grown men, sane men, were to work; and he would remind their Lordships that Mr. Hyndman had said that he looked to the time when Parliament would prescribe that three hours should be the amount of a man's day's work. The Technical Instruction Bill provided for the establishment of schools where modelling wood, carving, and other instruction was to be given, including "musical drill." Now, "musical drill" meant dancing, though it probably would not look well that it should appear as dancing in the curriculum, and be paid for out of the rates; so that "musical drill" was simply dust thrown in the eyes of the ratepayers. He found also that, in the evening schools, Welsh was to be taught, so that the language of "gallant little Wales" would not die out. The moral to be drawn from this kind of legislation was that our liberty was being lost, and that public policy was being made an apology for private plunder. According to the French saying, *La démocratie c'est l'envie*, and it might be added *c'est le vol;* and though the attack of the Socialists in this country had commenced against the land, capitalists and traders and manufacturers ought to awaken to the fact that their turn would certainly come. On the Continent the Socialistic war was against the *bourgeois* and all employers of labour. The most manifest instance of the failure of this class of legislation was in Ireland, where, after a series of measures confiscating the landlords' property, failure stared the Government in the face, and those who were sought to be conciliated remained unconciliated. Those who were responsible for these measures ought to suffer the keenest of all remorse—the remorse of feeling that crimes had been committed in vain. He was sorry that the Front Opposition Bench was not more fully occupied — [Lord DENMAN and Lord MOUNT-TEMPLE were the sole occupants]—for a few nights ago his observations in defence of freedom of contract were received with sneers and jeers by noble Lords sitting on that Bench. The principle of free contract, which was the very soul of commercial enterprize, was barred in every possible way, nominally for the sake of the welfare of the masses, but really for the purchase of votes. Both sides of politicians were responsible, but the tone of the two differed materially. There was a time not so very long since when the Liberal Party under Lord Palmerston walked in the path of economic virtue. In 1870, however, they went after Mr. Gladstone, just as the Jews, according to Scripture, went after strange gods, and had gone from bad to worse, until they now found them—politically—soliciting every man who could vote. If he thought that this change of views was due to a *bonâ fide* conviction on their part he would respect them; but it was known that that was not the case. Their conversion was as sudden as that of St. Paul; but it was not brought about by a light from heaven, but by the flash of an Irish murderer's gun, which they had not got the courage to face. The Conservative Party now appeared to have gone in for the same line of business; but they, at least, had the decency not to sneer and jeer at those who, however feebly, endeavoured to uphold the sound economic doctrines of the past, which, until recently, had been the basis of all legislation. He had said that there was nothing to dread from the Socialism of the street and the froth and scum thrown off there. The Socialism of the stree was not making considerable progress in this country. At the same time, there was something significant in the meetings which were held in Hyde Park, one of which assembled yesterday near the Marble Arch, and in the great number of debating clubs in which Socialistic doctrines were advocated. In many of these clubs there was a close imitation of Parliamentary forms—there was a Government and an Opposition and Ministers of State. There was one in particular, which met near where their Lordships were assembled, and was called the Charing Cross Debating Society. The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury was Mr. Champion; Mrs. Besant also held office; and the Chief Secretary was the Rev. Stewart Headlam, editor of *The Christian Society*. [The noble Earl then read extracts from the Queen's Speech, in which deep regret was expressed at the unequal distribution of property, at the luxury of the rich and idle classes, which tended to the depression of the poor, and to the wasteful and unbusiness-like management of Public Departments.] Taking all these symptoms into consideration, and taking also into consideration the conduct of Members of Parliament, and even some Members of their Lordships' House, he could not think that the outlook was very encouraging. Where, then, were we to look for hope? He believed there was still hope, and that hope was to be found in the conduct of the great body of the people on the celebration of Her Majesty's Jubilee, when it was clearly demonstrated how thorough was the loyalty and how sound the heart of the people of this country. It was not to the Leaders in political life that we must look. They must look elsewhere. In a speech made in "another place" by a man of conspicuous ability and great oratorical power, who possessed immense influence with the masses of the people, he was glad to find the true doctrines of self-reliance and individual responsibility laid down with great force. In a speech against the proposal to prohibit the work of pit-brow women, Mr. Bradlaugh denounced the attempt to make men and women moral by legislation, and spoke of the general tendency in modern times to diminish the sense of personal responsibility. It was to men like Mr. Bradlaugh, and not to the occupants of the two Front Benches, that we must look for the enforcement of just and sound principles on such questions as the non-interference of the State in private bargains. If the Government had the courage to speak out as Mr. Bradlaugh had done, and to say that legislation was hurtful which checked individual enterprize, or diminished commercial responsibility—hurtful above all to those for whose supposed benefit it was carried, then, in the midst of this Socialistic legislation, which was sweeping away all the old landmarks of enlightened legislation, they need not despair. In conclusion, he thanked their Lordships for having listened so patiently to what he could not help making a long story.

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE (NO. 2) BILL [H.L.]

A Bill for extending the right of voting at Parliamentary elections to duly qualified women —Was *presented* by The Lord Denman; read 1ª. (No. 236.)

House adjourned at a quarter before Seven o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 15*th August*, 1887.

MINUTES.]—SUPPLY—*considered in Committee —Resolutions* [August 13] *reported.*

PUBLIC BILLS — *First Reading* — Coroners* [378]; Statute Law Revision* [379].

Second Reading—Valuation of Lands (Scotland) Amendment*; Police Constables' Pensions* [35]; Suffragan's Nomination* [102].

Report of Select Committee—Municipal Regulation (Constabulary, &c.) (Belfast) [No. 288].

Committee—Coal Mines, &c. Regulation [130]—R.P.; Small Debts (Scotland)* [42]—R.P.

Considered as amended—Third Reading—Friendly Societies Act (1875) Amendment (No. 3)* [353]; Public Libraries (Scotland) Acts Amendment* [180], and *passed.*

Withdrawn—Qualifications of Guardians of the Poor* [315].

QUESTIONS.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (IRELAND)—CLONES WATER SUPPLY.

MR. P. O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether any complaints have reached the Local Government Board concerning the quality and quantity of the Clones water supply; whether it is true that samples of the water were submitted to the public analyst of Dublin, and condemned by him as unfit for human consumption; and. whether the Clones Local Sanitary Board have taken any steps to provide a wholesome and efficient supply; and, if not, will the Local Government Board take any action to prevent the dangers of further delay in the matter?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): Complaints on this subject have reached the Local Government Board. Samples of water from the five public pumps in the town have been analyzed by the public analyst of Dublin. He pronounced the water of one to be utterly unfit for use, of two to be inferior, and of the other two to be of fairly good quality. The Local Government Board are at present in correspondence with the Rural Sanitary Authority in regard to the general question of the water supply to this town.

COMMISSIONERS OF LUNACY (SCOTLAND)—NORTHERN DISTRICT ASYLUM.

MR. MACDONALD CAMERON (Wick, &c.) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether it is the case that the Northern Lunacy District is the only lunacy district in Scotland where there are no wards provided for private patients, either in the district asylum or in some other institution within the district; whether it is the case that patients have to be enrolled as paupers before admission to the Northern District Asylum (at Dunain), even though their curators should be able and willing to pay for their maintenance; whether the Commissioners of Lunacy for Scotland have, in their last Report, pronounced this usage to be illegal; whether they are prepared to press the Northern District Lunacy Board to supply accommodation for private patients; and, whether there are any, and, if so, what, burghs in the Northern Lunacy District unrepresented on the District Board of Lunacy, and the reason why they have no representatives on the Board?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): There is no lunacy district known as the Northern Lunacy District. Shetland, Orkney, and Caithness each form a separate district, and their pauper lunatics are housed in Montrose or Edinburgh asylums. Sutherland, Ross, Cromarty, and Inverness form one district, and have a district asylum at Inverness. District asylums are provided by assessment only for paupers; but if there is spare accommodation in them, this may legally be used for private patients. The usage of housing patients as paupers, whose maintenance is privately paid for, was declared by the Lunacy Board in their Report to be illegal. There are seven Royal asylums in Scotland where such lunatics can be received at low rates of board. The burghs of Fortrose, Tain, Dornoch, and Cromarty have no separate representation on the Board of their district, owing to the small amount of their valuation.

SCOTLAND—CROWN RIGHTS—COUNTY OF ORKNEY.

Mr. MACDONALD CAMERON (Wick, &c.) asked the Lord Advocate, What amount of money per annum is collected by Mr. Barnett, in the County of Orkney, on behalf of the Crown, and the annual salary paid to that gentleman?

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): I gave the figures of the amount collected in an answer some days ago, and will be glad, if the hon. Member wishes it, to furnish him with a note of them. Mr. Barnett's salary is £120 per annum.

FISHERY BOARD (SCOTLAND)—SALARIES.

Mr. MACDONALD CAMERON (Wick, &c.) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether a Memorial from the fishery officers has recently been received by the Fishery Board of Scotland praying for an increase of salaries; and, whether the Board is prepared to consider their claims favourably and to recommend the Treasury to accede to their request?

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): The fishery officers applied to the Royal Commission on Civil Establishments in February last as to their emoluments being increased, and on the 9th ultimo the Fishery Board received a letter from the Committee of Officers stating that no communication had been received to the statement made by them to the Royal Commission, and again beseeching the Board to recommend an increase to their salaries and allowances. The Fishery Board stated, in reply, that as the officers themselves had applied to the Royal Commission, it would not be suitable for the Board to approach the Commission on the matter; but that if the Commission applied to the Board for any information they would be glad to give it, adding that, so far as the Board were aware, the Commission had not as yet been in Scotland.

WAR OFFICE (ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT)—ADULTERATED LEATHER.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) asked the Surveyor General of Ordnance, Whether he has yet received the chemist's Report on the adulterated leather, and if, in accordance with his promise, he will communicate such Report to the House; whether the specification provides that the leather should be oak-bark tanned; and, whether the hides of collar leather passed were tanned with chemicals and adulterated to add weight?

The SURVEYOR GENERAL (Mr. Northcote) (Exeter): The chemist to the War Department has reported that glucosides are employed in the tanning of leather, and that traces of glucose would be found after the process; but that a larger amount has been found in the hides he has examined than would, in his opinion, be accounted for by chemical reaction. The contractors' tanners contest the professional accuracy of this opinion. It appears to me, therefore, that further investigation is required, and I have given directions that an independent Report shall be prepared for the War Department from a competent outside source. The specification does not require that the leather should be oak-bark tanned.

Mr. HANBURY (Preston) inquired what were the names of the Members of the Commission of Inquiry?

Mr. BRADLAUGH asked, whether it was true that some of the leather was wet with glucose?

Mr. NORTHCOTE said he would ascertain.

EXCISE (IRELAND)—RUSSELL'S TEMPERANCE HOTEL, ST. STEPHEN'S GREEN, DUBLIN.

Mr. NOLAN (Louth, N.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether Russell's Temperance Hotel, Stephen's Green, Dublin, has been licensed as a house of public refreshment, resort, and entertainment, within the meaning of Section 6 of the Act 23 & 24 *Vict.* c. 107, during the last five years; and, if not now licensed, whether the Excise Authorities propose to take any action in the matter?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen) (St. George's, Hanover Square): No refreshment house licence has been taken out in respect of Russell's Temperance Hotel during the last five years. It is not regarded as a house of public refreshment, resort, and entertainment within the meaning of the section referred to; and no action is contemplated by the Excise Authorities beyond that of satisfying themselves, from time to time, that the business is carried on in such a way as not to make Mr. Russell liable to Licence Duty.

LAW AND POLICE (IRELAND) — ALLEGED ROBBERY AT ANGHOR (BOYLE).

Mr. HAYDEN (Leitrim, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he is aware that a man named William Armstrong was robbed of over £17 in the townland of Anghor on his way from the fair of Boyle on the 25th July last; whether John M'Gorhan, who had been, with his father, in the employment of of Mr. J. G. Bennison as an emergency man, swore an information to the effect that he saw a farmer named William M'Cartin commit the robbery; whether on this evidence M'Cartin was arrested and kept in gaol from Saturday until he was released on Wednesday, when he was admitted to bail; whether M'Gorhan left the country on the 1st August; whether Armstrong on the 6th August made an information charging M'Gorhan with the robbery; whether M'Gorhan alleged some years ago that he had been shot, and, on his information to that effect, was allowed £120 under the Crimes Act of 1882, which was levied off the Ballinamore District; and, whether the Government will take any action in the matter?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.), in reply, said, the facts of the case were mainly as indicated in the Question. With regard to the fifth paragraph, Armstrong swore in a previous information that the persons who robbed him were strangers. He did not know that any action could be taken.

SCOTLAND—ORKNEY AND SHETLAND ISLANDS.

Mr. MACDONALD CAMERON (Wick, &c.) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether it is the case that in 1748, when the Native Government of the Norse State of Orkney and Shetland was abolished, the Governor of the Islands was allowed to retain, as his private estate and revenue, all the lands, taxes, and other revenues of that abolished Government, without diminution; whether, at the same time, the Islands, being reduced to a Scottish county, were in addition to their Native taxes, assessed with the local and Imperial taxation of a Scottish county, being thereby subjected to a double taxation; and, whether the Islands are still so deprived of their Government lands, taxes, and other public revenues, and still subjected to a double taxation?

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): The Danish kingly rights in Orkney and Shetland were impignorated in 1471 by the King of Denmark in security of 50,000 florins, the dowry of his daughter, and were never redeemed. They were, in 1487, annexed to the Crown. After various grants from re-annexation to and devolutions from the Crown, Orkney and Shetland were, in 1707, finally devolved, with consent of the Scots Parliament, from the Crown, in favour of the then Earl of Morton, and were subsequently acquired by the ancestors of the present Earl of Zetland. The Crown rights consisted of (1) Scat duties out of lands possessed by uddalers; (2) the duties and mails, or rents, from Crown lands possessed by tenants, which, by Charters and otherwise, became rights of property under the burden of the Scat and a grassum; and (3) teind duties where the Crown was accountable to the Church for the teinds. The lands, when annexed to the Scottish Crown, were made liable to land tax and other taxes, in addition to the old Norse duties, and that notwithstanding the Scots Act of 1567, sec. 48, that Orkney and Shetland were not to be subject to the common laws of the Realm; and this, among the descendants of the old uddalers and tenants holding under Charter, has always been considered a grievance. Many of them have acquired by purchase Lord Zetland's rights; and where property has been sold these duties have always been taken into consideration. There never was a Governor of the Islands. The various disponees of the Crown exercised heritable jurisdiction, civil and criminal, as elsewhere in Scotland, until the passing in 1747 of the Act abolishing heritable jurisdiction.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT — MILTON ABBAS SCHOOL, BLANDFORD.

Mr. PORTMAN (Dorsetshire, N.) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, Whether, taking into consideration that the Milton Abbas School, Blandford, has now been closed for 10 years, and that the Scheme of the Endowed Schools Commissioners, for establishing in lieu thereof a girls' school, has met with general disapprobation in Blandford and the neighbourhood, he will take some steps to secure that the school shall speedily be re-opened for boys as in former years?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen) (St. George's, Hanover Square), in reply, said, he was aware that a great deal of dissatisfaction existed in the neighbourhood of Blandford with regard to the scheme referred to, and he was now in consultation with the Commissioners as to what steps should be given.

ADMIRALTY—THE EVOLUTIONARY SQUADRON—THE NORDENFELT GUNS.

Colonel DUNCAN (Finsbury, Holborn) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether the inquiry into the recent explosions of improvised blank cartridges for Nordenfelt guns in the Evolutionary Squadron has cast any reflection upon the efficiency of the guns themselves, their manufacture, or upon the Service ammunition supplied for their use?

The FIRST LORD (Lord George Hamilton) (Middlesex, Ealing), in reply, said, that the recent accidents on board the *Curlew* and *Black Prince* were due to defective blank ammunition being used, and no reflection was passed upon the Nordenfelt guns or the Service cartridges. The blank cartridges were improvised; and as he thought they were not safe, he had given orders that no firing was to be done with them in future.

WAR OFFICE — REGIMENTAL COLONELS OF THE ROYAL ARTILLERY.

Colonel DUNCAN (Finsbury, Holborn) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether the regimental colonels of the Royal Artillery who have been compulsorily retired under recent Warrants, and deprived of advantages to which they had reasonably looked forward, are to be treated in a less liberal manner than colonels in the Royal Engineers similarly retired; and, if so, whether the reason can be stated?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. E. Stanhope) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): The compensation granted to colonels of Artillery is calculated in precisely the same manner as that of colonels of Engineers; but, inasmuch as during employment the emoluments of the latter exceed those of the former on the average, the compensation of the Engineer colonel comes to the larger sum.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND) — AN EXCURSION TRAIN FROM PORTRUSH TO BELFAST—FIRING ON THE PEOPLE AT BALLYMONEY.

Sir CHARLES LEWIS (Antrim, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he has received further information as to the parties implicated in the use of missiles and fire-arms by the excursionists returning from Portrush to Belfast on the 7th; whether it is true that at Ballymoney there were any attacks, or signs of hostility, against the excursionists displayed by the people gathered at the station, or along the railroad line; whether a man named Crawford, a spectator, was struck with a bullet fired from the excursion train, and was saved from great injury by its coming in contact with a copper coin in his pocket; whether there was one Head Constable, two acting sergeants, and six constables (the whole force in barracks at the time excepting one) stationed along the railway on either side of the station; and, whether at Portrush there was any firing reported by the police as having come from any party but the excursionists?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): The police report that at Ballymoney there were no attacks made by the people on the excursionists. The people were inclined to stone the train, but were prevented by the police. The excursionists fired several shots, apparently without any provocation, and Crawford was hit on the thigh, but not injured. I am not aware to what his escape from injury was due. There were 11 policemen posted at the station. The excursionists alone used fire-arms at Portrush. They fired there about six shots in all; but no one was injured.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.) asked, whether the right hon. Gentleman was aware that a telegram was sent to the Constabulary in Belfast from Ballymoney, or Ballymena, stating that this armed outrage had occurred; and whether there had been any search made of the excursionists on their arrival in Belfast?

Mr. M'CARTAN (Down, S.) asked the right hon. Gentleman, whether it was a fact that the excursionists were first attacked at Portrush; whether on their way to Portrush they took off their sashes lest they might give offence; whether it was a fact that before they came to Ballymena stones were placed across the line for the purpose of throwing the second train, which contained a large number of excursionists, off the line; and that when they came to Belfast they were attacked there; and whether he was aware that one person was arrested, and sentenced to two months' imprisonment for attacking them?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said, he would require Notice of the hon. Member's (Mr. Johnston's) Question, as he did not know what occurred as regards the police in Belfast. As regards the Question put by the hon. Member opposite (Mr. M'Cartan), it was true, apparently, that some provocation had been given at Portrush to the excursionists; but there was no provocation offered which would be sufficient to justify them in firing shots, which was the method by which the excursionists apparently replied. There was an attempt made to upset the second train; but the attempt was frustrated by the vigilance of the police. The attempt was not made until the mob became excited, not unnaturally, by the unprovoked firing from the train upon them at places where they had not given any provocation whatever to the excursionists.

Mr. M'CARTAN asked the right hon. Gentleman, whether he had any objection in this case to grant an inquiry into the origin of the attacks, and all the circumstances connected with them; and whether he was aware that the Catholics of Belfast desired that the fullest investigation should be held into the whole matter?

Mr. JOHNSTON said, the Orange Party were also most anxious that the fullest inquiry should be held.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said, that, so far as he knew, there were no matters connected with these occurrences which remained in doubt; and therefore he did not know whether anything could be gained by an inquiry. There were, obviously, faults on both sides; but he was bound to say that the excursionists were far more in fault than the others.

INLAND NAVIGATION AND DRAINAGE (IRELAND)—THE RIVER BARROW.

Mr. LEAHY (Kildare, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether, in making the preliminary inquiry for the drainage of the River Barrow, the plans of Messieurs Lewis and Strype, which have found so much favour with all parties interested in the work, will be considered; whether, in preparing for intended legislation, the proposal of those eminent engineers, who say that the reasonable outlay of £153,000 is quite enough for all practical purposes, will be seriously entertained; and, if not, can he state for what reason; and, whether it is intended to make the expense a public charge, or, in case it is intended to raise any portion off the districts, will the people have an opportunity of expressing their views on the plans, the cost, and the mode of raising the proportionate amount necessary?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): I have no reason to doubt that all plans and proposals which may be put forward in regard to the drainage of the River

Barrow will receive careful attention. The question in connection with the incidence of the charge in carrying out the works is one that must await the decision of the Legislature.

THE COLONIES—COLONIAL MAPS IN THE LIBRARY OF THIS HOUSE.

MR. KIMBER (Wandsworth) asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether the Colonial Office possesses, or can supply from time to time, sufficient information to enable the Colonial maps in the Library of this House to be marked with the railways, roads, and telegraph and postal stations now existing and in progress in each Colony; and, whether he will take such steps as will enable this to be done?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir HENRY HOLLAND) (Hampstead): The Colonial Office has, or can obtain, the necessary information; but as the progress of settlements in the principal Colonies renders it important to have the most recent maps of those Colonies, the preferable course would appear to be to procure for the Library of the House, from time to time, such maps giving the desired information as the Colonial Governments may recommend.

IRELAND—DESTRUCTION OF TURF BY FIRE AT TRILLICK, CO. LONGFORD.

MR. HAYDEN (Leitrim, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether information has reached him that, on the 24th of July last, a large rick of turf, the property of James Fitzpatrick, of Trillick, near Longford, was destroyed by fire; whether, on the two days preceding the fire, the police were engaged in musketry practice adjacent to where the rick of turf stood; whether, on the day the fire broke out, the Militia were similarly engaged on the ground; whether, in reply to a Memorial addressed to Dublin Castle on the subject, Sir Redvers Buller admitted that the turf had been accidentally burned at the rifle range on the day in question, and gave, as a ground for the Irish Government not giving compensation, that the fire did not take place on either of the days the Constabulary were engaged in practising; whether, from this admission, and for other reasons, there is reason to believe that the accidental fire was due to the presence of the Militia; and, whether, under all the circumstances, the Government will take into consideration the question of making compensation to this poor man for the loss of his winter's fuel?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): The answer to the first four paragraphs is in the affirmative. As regards the latter portion of the Question, I cannot express an opinion as to the origin of the fire, and can only adhere to the reply given to the Memorial, to the effect that the Irish Government have no responsibility in the matter.

MR. HAYDEN: Can the right hon. Gentleman say whether the presence of the Militia had anything to do with the fire.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Even if it were true that the Militia caused the fire, the Irish Government have no responsibility in the matter. It is entirely a matter for the War Office.

POLICE INSPECTION OF MUSIC HALLS, &c.—THE PAVILION MUSIC HALL.

MR. S. SMITH (Flintshire) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been called to a letter addressed by Mr. Henry Varley to Members of Parliament, complaining of alleged breaches of morality at the Pavilion Music Hall; and, whether he is prepared to see that the Law is enforced for the protection of public morals?

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers the Question, I would ask him whether this Henry Varley is the same person who issued a pamphlet to all the Members of this House containing most foul and scandalous insinuations against myself?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I am happy to say that my mind has not been prejudiced by those insinuations, as I have not seen the pamphlet. I therefore cannot answer the hon. Gentleman's Question. With regard to the Question on the Paper, I have seen a copy of the pamphlet by Mr. Varley, to which I suppose the hon. Member alludes. The music-hall in question is regularly visited by the police, who report to me that the place is well conducted, and that nothing obscene or indecent has been witnessed by the police, either in the entertainment or among the audience. If any breach of the law is reported to me, I shall certainly see that the law is enforced. I may add that Mr. Varley, who had given notice to oppose the renewal of the licence of the Pavilion Music Hall, did not attend before the Licensing Justices to sustain his objections, and the licence was renewed.

NAVY CONTRACTS — TENDERS FOR PORK.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether, in March last, tenders were invited for the supply of pork to the training ships lying off Devonport; whether the advertisements for such tenders stated that nothing but home fed and home cured pork would be accepted; whether, in spite of such condition, the contractor has not supplied home cured, but very inferior foreign, pork; and, whether the ships supplied with the same have been unable to use large quantities of it owing to its inferior quality?

LORD CHARLES BERESFORD (A LORD of the ADMIRALTY) (Marylebone, E.) (who replied) said: An advertisement was issued on February 11, 1887, for tenders for the supply of corned pork to Her Majesty's training ships at Devonport. The advertisement did not state that nothing but home-fed and home-cured pork would be accepted, as it is not usual for advertisements, which must always necessarily be brief, to contain all the conditions of the contracts. The advertisement, however, refers to the form of tender which states that American or other imported pork is not to be supplied. Inquiry has been made of the Commander-in-Chief at Devonport as to the quality of the pork. He reports that it has been excellent, and that none has been condemned as unfit for use. To prevent the delivery of American or other imported pork, the contract provides that the slaughter-house shall be open at all times to the inspection of the receiving officers. There has not been time yet to ascertain whether this inspection has taken place; but further inquiry will be made, and I will let the hon. Gentleman know the result of this inquiry.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)— ASSAULTS AT WESTPORT.

MR. MACARTNEY (Antrim, S.) had the following Question on the Paper, but did not ask it:—To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether his attention has been called to the following paragraph, in *The Sheffield Daily Telegraph* of 11th August:—

> "Our Dublin correspondent says:—I am in a position to inform you that the attack on a Protestant excursion party at Westport, which has been reported in your columns, has been followed by a state of things in the immediate district which is creating serious alarm among the Protestant residents. . . . . A few days ago a Protestant Police Inspector stayed at a Boycotted hotel in the district, and, on leaving, was the victim of a murderous assault for thus offending against the unwritten laws of the Nationalists. The Inspector bravely tackled his assailant, and held on to him in the midst of a hostile crowd till police assistance arrived;"

and, whether the Government will take steps to protect the law-abiding inhabitants of the district of Westport from the dangers which may be apprehended from the state of things alluded to?

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to draw your attention to a Question which appears on the Paper of a very offensive character to the county which I have the honour to represent. It is Question No. 19. The hon. Member for South Antrim placed it on the Paper; but he left his place in the House before the Question was called. I understand that on a previous occasion you ruled that any Question reflecting seriously upon a constituency, or a section of the people, when placed upon the Paper ought to be asked, if the hon. Member is in the House. The hon. Member deliberately left his place before the Question was called.

MR. SPEAKER: If the hon. Gentleman likes to ask the Question himself, it is perfectly competent for him to do so.

MR. DILLON: I beg to ask the Question of the Chief Secretary.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): I have not seen the newspaper paragraph alluded to in the Question; but I find that it has reference to the case of a man who refused to leave the hotel premises until supplied with drink, he at the time being intoxicated. He was removed from the premises, and subsequently arrested for being drunk and disorderly. The case has no connection with the religious ill-feeling which unhappily exists in the district.

RIOTOUS MEETINGS (IRELAND) — ORANGE MEETINGS AT LURGAN AND SILVERWOOD.

MR. M'CARTAN (Down, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether his attention had been called to the fact that, previous to the 12th July last, a monster meeting of Orangemen was announced to take place on that date at Lurgan, under the patronage of Lord Erne, and that seven magistrates, who presided at the Petty Sessions held immediately before the meeting, after consultation with Mr. Mayne, R.M., decided that, in order to preserve the peace, it would be necessary to have in Lurgan on that day a force consisting of 200 police and 50 Cavalry soldiers; whether these magistrates accordingly signed a requisition to this effect, and handed same to District Inspector Bigley; whether, notwithstanding this requisition, and the fact that some members of the local force were obliged to be at Armagh Assizes on the 12th July, no extra force was sent to Lurgan; whether any, and, if so, what answer was sent to the local magistrates; whether serious disturbances took place at Silverwood, near Lurgan, on that day, when a party of Orangemen on their return home attacked some Catholics, wounded two women, and wrecked two houses belonging to Catholics; whether shots were fired by the Orangemen, and one of them was terrifying the people by brandishing a scythe on the occasion; whether it was usual to leave Silverwood unprotected when such meetings were held at Lurgan; whether, on the evening of the 12th July, a number of Catholics went into Lurgan and offered to make information identifying the rioters, but no opportunity was given by the police; whether, on the following day, the same Catholics went to District Inspector Bigley, and were told by him "that he had too much to do to attend to their complaint;" whether the statements of those aggrieved persons were then taken on the 14th July, when a magistrate and the Petty Sessions clerk sent the complainants to the police; whether any steps were taken by the police to bring the offenders to justice; whether on the 20th July, when Mr. O'Reilly, solicitor, applied at Petty Sessions to have informations taken, the application was opposed by Mr. Bigley, who got an adjournment to the following day; whether he was then requested to telegraph to Dublin Castle for instructions, and received a reply not to prosecute; whether this is the same Mr. Bigley who ordered the police to fire into the "Catholic Street," at Lurgan, in March last; and, whether he will cause an inquiry to be made into the origin of, and the circumstances in connection with, the disturbances of March and July in this district?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): A requisition signed by the local magistrates, including Mr. Mayne, R.M., was forwarded, through the District Inspector of Constabulary, to the Executive asking for the presence of a body of police and Cavalry at Lurgan, at a meeting of Orangemen on July 12. The Lord Lieutenant, in the exercise of his discretion, decided not to send this extra force, but made arrangements for the drafting into Lurgan of a body of soldiers should disturbances arise. These arrangements were communicated to Mr. Mayne, R.M. Although some disturbances did take on July 12, they appear to be less serious than on later occasions, when a large extra force was present in the town. I have not had time, owing to the short notice given, to obtain a full report as to the latter portion of the Question; but I understand that proceedings are about to be instituted against some of the persons engaged in the attack.

MR. M'CARTAN asked the right hon. Gentleman, was he aware whether correspondence had taken place between the magistrates at Lurgan and the Under Secretary; and whether the explanation of the Under Secretary was regarded by them as both unsatisfactory and insufficient; and whether he was aware that in Lurgan riots had frequently taken place, and that soldiers, on the requisition of the magistrates, had been drafted into the town; whether he was aware the Under Secretary stated that he had considered the magistrates' application in connection with other Reports; and, whether the right hon. Gentleman could say from what quarter the other Reports came?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said, he was not conversant with the whole correspondence between the magistrates and the Under Secretary. He could not agree with the statement that the explanation of the Under Secretary was not satisfactory.

INDIA—THE NATIVE STATES (HYDERABAD)—THE SIRDAR DILER-UL-MULK.

Mr. M'LAGAN (Linlithgow) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, If it is true that the £83,000 was promised to Sirdar Diler-ul-Mulk, by the late Prime Minister of Hyderabad, in a letter to the Sirdar, in the following terms:—

> "Five per cent commission (or £83,000) on the whole amount to be appropriated in manner you think proper in rewarding the services of those who have been mainly instrumental in starting the scheme and in carrying it through;"

that, notwithstanding this letter, Sirdar Diler-ul-Mulk pocketed the whole of the £83,000, and, as the negotiator for raising the funds for making the railway, allowed as promotion money to persons in this country who carried through the railway scheme what was an equivalent to an additional sum of £175,000 out of the capital, thus devoting one-fifth of the whole sum raised in this country for forming the railway to promotion purposes; and, whether the Government will appoint a Committee, or support a Motion, by an independent Member, for the appointment of a Committee, to inquire into the alleged gross misappropriation, for the most part among persons in this country, of the funds of a *quasi*-independent Indian State, but a State in some measure under the protection of the Indian Government?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Sir John Gorst) (Chatham): The statements in the Question are substantially correct, except that the amount paid for promotion was, so far as is known to the Secretary of State, £138,000, and not £175,000. As the facts of the case are perfectly well known, the Secretary of State does not think that any object would be gained by the appointment of a Committee.

Sir GUYER HUNTER (Hackney, Central): As arising out of the reply of the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State, I would ask him whether the sum of £100,000 was not paid under an agreement with the India Office for the purpose of defraying all expenses up to the registration of the Company and remuneration for assuring capital, and whether that amount was not shown on the prospectus of the Company; and whether the balance of £35,000, and not £75,000 as stated by the hon. Member who put the Question, was not simply the commission granted on the debenture issue, and was allowed on the understanding that the debenture stock had been underwritten?

Sir JOHN GORST said, as to the first part of the Question, that he had stated, in answer to a Question put to him a few days ago, that the sum mentioned was paid by the Hyderabad Government. As to the other part of the Question, he was not aware that the Secretary of State had any official knowledge on the subject; but perhaps the hon. Gentleman would give Notice of his Question.

NORTH AMERICAN FISHERIES—THE NEWFOUNDLAND FISHERY NEGOTIATIONS.

Mr. HENRY H FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether the sum proposed to be voted on the Supplementary Estimates for allowances and expenses in respect of the Newfoundland Fishery Negotiations includes any claim which the late Government refused to sanction?

The SECRETARY (Mr. Jackson) (Leeds, N.): My answer is no.

BOARD OF TRADE—LABOUR STATISTICS—NORTHUMBERLAND AND DURHAM MINERS' UNIONS.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether the Northumberland and Durham Miners' Unions have a permanent relief fund, which has been in existence 25 years, with copious annually published Reports; whether the last published Report shows 88,000 members, with invested assets £120,303, and an annual income of £55,053; and, whether the Northumberland Miners' Association, the Durhum Miners' Association, and their joint Permanent Relief Fund, are included in the 18 Trade

Unions, of which Tables are given in the Paper on Labour Statistics, recently issued by the Board of Trade; and, if not, why the easily obtainable details of these societies, and other large Miners' Unions, are omitted?

THE SECRETARY (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): The Northumberland and Durham miners have a permanent relief fund, but it is not a Trade Union, and could, therefore, not be included in a Report on Trades Unions. The Miners' Associations of Durham and Northumberland were applied to for Returns, in common with all the Miners' Associations of the country, but have as yet failed to supply them. The Board of Trade are, therefore, unable to state what are the numbers and financial condition of these Bodies.

BOARD OF TRADE—LABOUR STATISTICS — THE UNITED PLUMBERS' ASSOCIATION.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether the United Plumbers Association of Great Britain and Ireland was applied to by the Labour Statistical Department of the Board of Trade to furnish information for publication; whether any information was received, and when; why no statement is made as to the nature of such information in the Paper upon Labour Statistics recently laid before Parliament; whether he will state how many Trade Societies in all were applied to for similar information, and when; how many replies giving information were received; and, why the information received has not been published?

THE SECRETARY (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): The United Operative Plumbers' Association was applied to for information by means of a Circular issued in October last. In November five quarterly Reports only were sent in by this Association. Since then three further quarterly Reports have been received. The information supplied by those Reports was insufficient for the purposes of the Report, and could not be tabulated. The Circular asking for information was sent out to 166 Societies. Only 30 Societies, in addition to those included in the Report of the Labour Correspondent, sent in any information; and this information consisted merely of monthly or quarterly statements, which could not be included in the Report on account of insufficiency of detailed information.

TRADE AND COMMERCE — FOREIGN BOUNTIES ON SUGAR — UNEMPLOYED WORKMEN AT THE EAST END (METROPOLIS).

MR. WOOTTON ISAACSON (Tower Hamlets, Stepney) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether he is aware that a large number of workmen have recently been thrown out of employment in the East End owing to the failure of a sugar refinery establishment; and, whether he is taking any steps to alter the law relating to foreign bounties on sugar?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square) (who replied) said: The Government have no official information, but have learnt with regret that a refinery has lately been closed in the East End, causing the discharge of a considerable number of work people. We shall continue to do our best, by means of negotiation, to induce Foreign Governments to abandon the injurious system of bounties. There are, of course, no laws in this country affecting the question.

RAILWAYS (ENGLAND AND WALES)—LEVEL CROSSINGS — FATAL ACCIDENT AT BROMLEY (LONDON, CHATHAM, AND DOVER RAILWAY).

MR. WOOTTON ISAACSON (Tower Hamlets, Stepney) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been called to the fatal accident at the level crossing at Bromley; and, considering that this level crossing is close to the centre of a largely populated town, he will call on the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway Company to construct a foot-bridge at this point?

THE SECRETARY (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth) (who replied) said: The attention of the Board of Trade has been called to the accident in question, both by a Report from the Company and by a communication from the Coroner. The Board of Trade have no power to compel the Company to erect a foot-bridge; but they have directed one of their Inspecting Officers to hold an inquiry, with a view of ascertaining whether any arrangements can be made to prevent the recurrence of such an accident. They have also forwarded to the Company and the Bromley Local Board the recommendation of the Coroner's jury—that the Railway Company and the Local Board should combine to provide a safer means for persons passing over the level crossings between Bromley and Shortlands Stations.

ADMIRALTY (SHIPS)—SPECIAL TESTS OF SPEED.

Sir HENRY TYLER (Great Yarmouth) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether he would now, as a special test of existing vessels (without waiting for others hereafter to be constructed or taken over), require any two of the most recent and powerful ships in Her Majesty's Service to undertake four days' continuous steaming at full speed?

The FIRST LORD (Lord George Hamilton) (Middlesex, Ealing): Orders have already been given for eight typical ships of recent construction to carry out the full-power trial referred to. Of these, up to the present time, the *Phaeton* and *Mutine* are the only ships that have reported. In both cases the trials have been satisfactory. The other ships will report as their trials are completed.

NATIONAL EDUCATION (IRELAND)—BOOKS USED IN THE NATIONAL SCHOOLS.

Mr. M'CARTAN (Down, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutant of Ireland, with reference to the contract recently entered into by the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland for books used in the National Schools, Whether the new second books now supplied are stitched with wire instead of with Irish linen threads, as formerly; whether they are inferior in workmanship, less serviceable, and more liable to lose their covers when opened; whether the children have to pay the same price as formerly for them; whether the late contractor has offered to supply more securely bound books at prices 10 per cent lower than the price now charged; and, whether, under the circumstances, the teachers will be allowed to purchase, sell, and use in their schools the books so procurable at a lower price?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): The Commissioners of National Education report that the new second books are stitched with wire. The books are not inferior, but quite the contrary, a great improvement in their durability being effected by the wire stitching. The children pay the same price as formerly. The late contractor has not offered to supply better books at the reduced price named.

Mr. M'CARTAN asked, if the right hon. Gentleman was aware that books stitched with wire could not be opened without tearing the covers of them?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said, he was not aware.

WAR OFFICE (ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT)—THE NEW SWORD BAYONET.

Mr. WOOTTON ISAACSON (Tower Hamlets, Stepney) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether the men who have received the new sword bayonet, with the foresight on the ring, have had any target practice so as to test the accuracy of the shooting; if so, whether a Report of the result will be laid before the House?

The SURVEYOR GENERAL of ORDNANCE (Mr. Northcote) (Exeter) (who replied) said: The only issues of these sword bayonets have been to the Navy, and as yet no Reports have been received from that Service.

Mr. WOOTTON ISAACSON asked, if the hon. Gentleman anticipated a Report being made on the subject?

Mr. NORTHCOTE: Certainly.

WAR OFFICE—QUARTERMASTERS AND RIDING MASTERS.

Sir SAMUEL WILSON (Portsmouth) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether the special appointments open to Quartermasters and Riding Masters which carry the rank of Major shall be given exclusively to the senior Quartermasters and Riding Masters of the Army?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. E. Stanhope) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): I cannot give any such assurance. The appointments referred to are those of special responsibility, for which the best qualified officers will be selected, irrespective of seniority.

COAL MINES, &c. REGULATION BILL—WEIGHTS AND MEASURES ACT, 1878.

Mr. P. STANHOPE (Wednesbury) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether he will consider the possibility of introducing, in the Committee stage of the Coal Mines, &c. Regulation Bill, some addition to the clause dealing with the Weights and Measures Act of 1878, in order to provide against the notorious contravention of the intention of that Act, in the practice of selling coal in canal boats by fictitious measurement, which exclusively prevails in the mining districts of South Staffordshire?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): I think it is outside the scope of the Coal Mines, &c. Regulation Bill to legislate for sales of coal, with which the Bill has nothing to do. I am not aware that the Weights and Measures Act of 1878 does not satisfactorily deal with the subject of sales.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES ACTS—AMENDMENTS.

Mr. GODSON (Kidderminster) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether Her Majesty's Government intend to deal any further with the many difficulties arising from the present defects in the working of the Friendly Societies Acts than they are about to do in "The Friendly Societies Act (1875) Amendment (No. 3) Bill?"

The SECRETARY (Mr. Jackson) (Leeds, N.): Yes, Sir; it is the intention of the Government to deal further with the difficulties arising from defects in the laws relating to Friendly Societies. The Government propose to make an exhaustive inquiry into the whole question, the Bill at present before the House dealing only with some minor points on which all are agreed.

FOOTPATHS AND OPEN SPACES—PROTECTION OF PUBLIC RIGHTS (LOCAL GOVERNMENT BILL, SCOTLAND).

Mr. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether his attention has been called to the injury inflicted on the inhabitants of Fife, in the neighbourhood of Aberdour, by the taking by the North British Railway Company, under powers alleged to have been conferred by a Private Act of Parliament, of an ancient footpath along the shore of the Firth of Forth, commanding views of great beauty; and, whether, in the preparation of a Local Government Bill for Scotland, he will consider the propriety of vesting in a representative Local Authority the duty of watching over and taking steps to protect the interests of the public in the matter of footpaths and open spaces, so as to prevent the occurrence of such injuries as the destruction of this Aberdour footpath has caused?

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): I do not understand that the Aberdour footroad has been shut up by the construction of the railway, although it is clear that the line could not be made without, in some degree, injuring its amenity. I shall be glad to consider whether, in any coming legislation, aid can be given to the saving as much as possible of similar public rights when works of public utility are being promoted in Parliament.

METROPOLITAN BOARD OF WORKS—DANGEROUS CONDITION OF THE CHURCH OF ST. MARY-LE-STRAND.

Mr. KIMBER (Wandsworth) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether, having regard to the information lately given by the Metropolitan Board of Works respecting the dangerous condition of St. Mary-le-Strand, and to the great public improvement and safety which would be effected by the removal of the church, the Government would be disposed to introduce a short Bill, before the Prorogation of Parliament, authorizing such removal, in the event of the Patron and Incumbent, the Vestry, and the Board of Works, and any other parties properly to be consulted, considering it expedient; and, whether he is aware that the worshippers in the church are very few, and could be easily accommodated in any of the churches in the immediate neighbourhood?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): Full information as to the present condition of the church of St. Mary-le-Strand was given to my hon. Friend on Monday last; and he was informed that, though the Metropolitan Board of Works had considered the suggestion as to the removal of the church, they were not in a position at present to act upon the proposal. It is not the duty of Her Majesty's Government to introduce Bills relative to Metropolitan improvements; and I am unable, therefore, to give my hon. Friend any hopes of the Government taking any steps in the matter.

COLONIZATION—GUARANTEED FUNDS.

Mr. KIMBER (Wandsworth) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether any proposal ever submitted to or discussed with any of the Colonies on the subject of colonization has been based on the principle of the funds being provided by the public here, by subscription to a public marketable stock, to be issued upon the security of the lands settled on, and guaranteed as to the interest by the co-operation of the Imperial and Colonial Governments, the latter undertaking and guaranteeing the administration of the capital and the collection of the interest from the settlers and the Imperial Government lending its guarantee, by way of endorsement of the Colonial security, to enable the money to be raised at the lowest possible cost; and, if not, whether there is any reason why an inquiry should not be addressed to the several Colonies, to ascertain their views upon such a plan, or, in the alternative, for their suggestions of any other plan, in order that the same may be submitted to the opinion of this House next Session?

The First Lord (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): The subject of colonization on the principles set out in the Question of my hon. Friend has not been discussed with the Colonial Governments. There seems no reason why the attention of Colonial Governments should not be directed to this question, and why they should not be requested to state their views thereon, and Her Majesty's Government will be prepared to take the necessary steps.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Mr. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether he could state when the Allotments Bill would be taken in Committee?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster) said, that the right hon. Gentleman was aware that the Government were under certain engagements in regard to certain other measures, and especially that the Coal Mines, &c. Regulation Bill should be passed through Committee before any other Business was dealt with. After that he had entered into an engagement with the right hon. Gentleman himself that the Diplomatic Vote should be taken, and then would follow the consideration of the Irish Land Law Bill on Thursday and also the Irish Votes. He was unable, therefore, to say when progress would be made with the Allotments Bill; but he hoped that it would not long be delayed.

Mr. CHILDERS asked, whether the right hon. Gentleman would undertake to give, at any rate, two days' Notice when it would be taken?

Mr. W. H. SMITH said, he was afraid that at that period of the Session he could not give two days' Notice; but he would give as much Notice as he could. The right hon. Gentleman would see that on the 15th of August it was impossible to give as much Notice as he would be delighted to give at another period.

Mr. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee), in consequence of what happened on Friday, when two Bills of considerable Constitutional importance were read a second time before they were delivered to Members, asked whether the Government intended to proceed with any Bills other than those already introduced into the House; and, if so, whether care would be taken that an interval of two or three days at least should elapse between their being circulated and the time fixed for second reading?

Mr. W. H. SMITH said, he was unable to agree with the hon. and learned Member that the Bills which he had referred to were proceeded with before they were circulated. The Chairman of Committees and hon. Friends behind him would bear him out in stating the fact that the Bills were circulated, although the hon. and learned Gentleman might not have received copies of them. He could not undertake that, under no circumstances, should a Bill of minor importance be proceeded with within two or three days after it was delivered. At this period of that Session no general engagement could be given as to the progress of Business; but certainly no Bill of primary importance would be proceeded with until it had been circulated and considered by hon. Members.

Mr. E. ROBERTSON said, the right hon. Gentleman had not met his point—that the Bills were not circulated before being read a second time. Was it not the fact that in the Votes distributed to Members to-day the Bills were returned as being distributed on Saturday, the second reading having been taken on the previous night?

Mr. W. H. SMITH said, he had not looked at the Votes sufficiently to confirm the statement of the hon. and learned Gentleman.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) asked, when the Indian Budget would be brought forward?

Mr. W. H. SMITH said, that for the reasons already given he could not say; but it would be taken on the earliest possible day.

Mr. BRADLAUGH: Can the right hon. Gentleman say it will not be taken this week?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: It certainly will not be taken this week.

In reply to Mr. H. Gardner (Essex, Saffron Walden),

Mr. W. H. SMITH said, that he could not make any definite statement as to the Tithe Rent-Charge Bill.

Mr. CHILDERS: When will the right hon. Gentleman be able to make a statement?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: I hope on Thursday I shall be able to make a statement as to this Bill.

Mr. CHILDERS: And other Bills?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: Yes; and other Bills.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

——o——

COAL MINES, &c. REGULATION BILL.—[Bill 130.]

Mr. Secretary Matthews, Mr. Stuart-Wortley.)

COMMITTEE. [*Progress 24th June.*]

[FOURTH NIGHT.]

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Certificated Managers.

Clause 21 (Appointment of manager of mines).

Mr. W. H. Smith

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): Clause 21 already provides that every mine shall be under one responsible manager, who shall be the holder of a certificate of the first class; but by provision *c.*, Section 3, it is provided that—

> "A mine in which not more than thirty persons are employed below ground shall be exempt from the provisions of this section, unless the Inspector of the district, by notice in writing, served on the owner or agent of the mine, requires that it be under the control of a manager."

How many mines there are in the United Kingdom with fewer than 30 miners employed underground I do not know. The Returns do not show it; but I believe that in the Eastern District of Scotland, which is under the inspection of Mr. Ralph Moore, there are dozens of these collieries with considerably less, in many cases, than 30 employed underground. The Returns from 1850 to 1851 contain some 23½ pages of mines in this position—that is to say, that there were at that time about 437 collieries in that district alone, and among them were, at least, 47 mines or pits which had less than 30 men employed underground in each of them. That may show the enormous number of collieries throughout the Kingdom which may be found employing this small number of men, and which would consequently be brought under the exception of the statutory protection which this clause is intended to afford. In these small collieries in the Eastern Division of Scotland, some of them are fiery, and some not fiery; several are 600, 800, and 1,000 feet deep, and I find that in the year to which the Return refers there were 10 men killed in them, and 19 men injured. Therefore, some rough idea may be formed of the very important part the small pits play in the general coal economy of the country, and how necessary it is for the Committee to apprehend what the Government propose to do with regard to pits as divided between larger and smaller—the line of demarcation being the employment of 30 men underground. I maintain that, however small these pits may be, they ought all of them to be under the control of some perfectly qualified and efficient manager. While, on the one hand, no one proposes that a manager should be in exclusive charge of each of these small undertakings, yet I would submit that it is perfectly reasonable to ask that, on the other hand, he should not have under his care so large a number of them that the superintendence and responsibility would be frittered away until it became little more than nominal. The object of my Amendment is not to break up the unity and control of any large undertaking, because it is obvious that there must be some guiding mind and some controlling authority in every pit, however large it may be; but my object is to secure that in every pit or mine there shall be a certificated manager who shall be personally and immediately responsible for the general conduct, management, and superintendence of the undertaking, and that the number of men under one manager shall not be so numerous as to render his superintendence practically valueless. If hon. Members will examine the Returns and Reports they will find that it is almost impossible to draw any line of division between the different collieries or pits themselves, because any division of that sort would work most unequally in different districts. In some districts there are comparatively a large number of small pits and mines; while in other districts the small undertakings are comparatively few. Most of the collieries employ many hundreds of men in each of the mines; and, therefore, the only reasonable line of demarcation we can adopt is to be found in the number of men employed in one or more mines. By that means we can secure that each mine shall be under the efficient control of a perfectly qualified manager, and, at the same time, we can secure that no manager shall be restricted to one undertaking which is not sufficient to occupy his whole time and attention. When the Amendment was before the Committee on the last occasion the importance of the principle involved in it was recognized by both sides of the House, and the Government promised to consider the question. The right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary was appealed to by the late Home Secretary, and he said that he saw the force of what I had stated to the Committee, and that before the next meeting of the Committee upon the Bill he would consider what the Government could do on the subject. I then stated, and I repeat now, that I am not at all desirous of standing by the number of 30. I admit that that is a very low number indeed, and if the principle contained in the Amendment is assented to, I am prepared to accept any Amendment which may be suggested by persons of practical experience; but I desire to add that since the Committee sat last, I have been informed, on creditable authority, that any difficulty as to the number of first-class certificated managers has no foundation in fact. I am sure that, at the present time, there are 300, more or less, of certificated managers out of employment, so that there is an abundant number of first-class certificated holders eligible and available to take charge of all the pits that are likely to require additional managers under the further limitations which I propose. Possibly the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary will be able to inform the Committee what decision the Government have arrived at.

Amendment proposed,

In page 10, line 27, after sub-section (2), to insert the words—"No person shall act as manager to more than one mine in which more than thirty persons are employed below ground."—(*Mr. Arthur O'Connor.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): The Amendment moved by the hon. Gentleman is one of a class which have the same object, which is to obtain greater security by limiting the number of pits or the number of men under one manager. The hon. Member for North-East Lanarkshire (Mr. Donald Crawford) has given Notice of a Proviso that not more than six pits shall be under the charge of one manager; and the hon. Member for the Normanton Division of Yorkshire (Mr. Pickard) proposes that the limitation shall be to mines where there are more than 500 persons employed. The hon. Member for East Donegal (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) who has just sat down proposes to limit the employment of a manager to one mine, if there are more than 30 persons employed.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: No.

MR. MATTHEWS: That is the way in which I read the Amendment. The words are—

"No person shall act as manager for more than one mine in which more than 30 persons are employed below ground."

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: The meaning of the Amendment is that a manager, having more than one mine under his care, shall not have charge of more than 30 men at the same place. The effect will be this—that a manager may have half-a-dozen mines or more under his care; but the total number of men, in that case, must not exceed 30 in each mine.

Mr. MATTHEWS: The Amendment on the Paper certainly lays down that if there are more than 30 persons in a mine the manager shall not act for more than one. This matter has been very much considered, and I think the difficulty generally felt was in laying down any rule to meet all cases. A suggestion was made, which I think was almost universally accepted, that the question of the management of mines being insufficient, or of the mines themselves being neglected because the manager had too much to do, might be left to be dealt with under Section 43—that is to say, that Section 43 should be included so as to enable the Inspector to step in and say—"Your mine is too large for your manager to superintend properly," or he may say—"Your manager has too many men under his supervision, and therefore I make a complaint that under Section 43 it is dangerous or defective, and requires to be remedied, and unless the same be remedied forthwith I shall report the state of the mine to the Secretary of State." We propose to insert words to enable the Inspector to give notice, if there are any causes of danger not expressly provided against. It would be easy to insert words in the clause to meet the case in that way; but any hard-and-fast rule would produce inconvenience and dissatisfaction, and as a matter of practice would probably work badly. Under the Bill as it stands, every mine with more than 30 men below ground must have a manager who must hold a first-class certificate, and must give his own daily personal supervision to the mine, or in his absence there must be another person, either with a first or a second-class certificate, who is able to devote the same attention to the supervision of the mine. It is, therefore, provided by the Bill that either a first-class certificated manager, or a duly qualified certificated manager, must give his personal supervision to the mine. It was in order to let in the practical working man that we gave the second-class certificate. If that is not considered desirable, it will be necessary to substitute for the under manager a first-class certificated manager also. In addition to that, we propose that the Inspector shall be able to step in and say that the manager has too much work to do, or that he does not give sufficient attention to the mine, and somebody must be employed in his place, or the amount of work must be curtailed. I believe that the difficulty may be met satisfactorily in that way.

Mr. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck): I do not think it would be possible to carry out the suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman, unless he contemplates a large increase in the number of Inspectors. I imagine that there would be great difficulty in the way of carrying out such a suggestion as that which he has put before the Committee. At the present moment it is impossible for the number of Inspectors to go over anything like the whole of the collieries in the United Kingdom; and if their attention is to be called to difficulties in the way of management, and to complaints which may be made by the workmen, it will at once lead to the creation of ill-feeling between the workmen and the management, and there will be no end of mischief if the Inspectors are called upon to adjudicate in the event of difficulties of this kind arising. For my own part, I cannot see that the right hon. Gentleman is likely to solve the problem by suggesting that the Inspectors should be permitted to call the attention of the manager to the fact that he has too much work to do, and that there must be additional managers appointed. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will relinquish altogether the idea of giving the Inspectors increased power to interfere in cases of this kind.

Mr. F. S. POWELL (Wigan): I understood that a promise was made, on the part of the Government, to bring up words to meet this difficulty; but I fail to find them on the Notice Paper.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the hon. Member for East Donegal press the Amendment?

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: Oh, yes, certainly; but I shall be perfectly prepared to accept an Amendment to the Amendment.

MR. BURT (Morpeth): I think my hon. Friend the Member for East Donegal has raised a very important point, and one that deserves the serious consideration of the Committee. I have myself given a good deal of attention to this question, and while I think it is desirable that there should be some limit to the number of mines that should be under the management of one certificated manager, I find that the subject is one which is beset with very great difficulties indeed. I must say that, as far as I am aware, what the miners complain of, and what we have to guard against, is the danger of lessening the responsibility of the agent or owner, by making it possible for them to shelter themselves behind their subordinates. Again and again there has been a demand that the responsibility of the agent and the owner should be strengthened. There is no doubt in my mind that the Amendments which have been inserted in the present Bill have considerably improved the position of affairs in regard to the manager, and I understand that the Government are prepared to accept the Amendment which stands on the Paper in the name of the hon. Member for the Normanton Division of Yorkshire (Mr. Pickard)—namely, to insert the word "personal," in order to secure that—

> "In every mine required by the Act to be under the control of a certificated manager daily personal supervision shall be exercised."

By that means a real supervision will be secured. Speaking of the mines in the North of England, I must say that many of those in Northumberland are under the supervision of a certificated manager. The same individual may have the management of three or four collieries, and as far as I know there has been no complaint on that score. In every case the manager has under him a thoroughly competent man; but I am afraid that there are not certificated managers enough if it is desired to impose some limit such as the limit proposed. I certainly think that it is very desirable to have a limit to the number of mines under one manager, but I would submit to my hon. Friend the Member for East Donegal that the question of localities and the concentration or otherwise of the mines is quite as important as the number of men employed, because it may be quite as easy in one case to manage 1,000 or 1,500 men as it would be in another to overlook 400 or 500 men. We have, therefore, a somewhat intricate question to deal with, and if we fix any limit arbitrarily it would probably be a very difficult thing to satisfy the requirements of all parts of the country. I do not myself believe that it is always desirable to put a limit on the number of men that may be placed under the management of a certificated manager, and I understand that my hon. Friend will not adhere to the number he has proposed. I think the Amendment suggested by my hon. Friend the Member for the Normanton Division of Yorkshire comes much nearer to the point.

MR. W. ABRAHAM (Glamorgan, Rhondda): I imagine that the intention of the Government and of hon. Members of this Committee in passing this Bill is to secure the greater safety of life and limb in these mines, without unnecessarily impeding the operations in the mines themselves. I am afraid, however, that if we in any way relax the responsibilities of the management, anything we may do in this House will have a contrary effect to that which we desire. At present it is well known that collieries which employ more than 30 men underground are compelled to have a first-class certificated manager—a manager holding a certificate of thorough competency. The contention that there are not a sufficient number of competent managers to be found is, I think, rather weak, and my experience in South Wales teaches me that it is erroneous also. I am certain that in my part of the country the supply is much greater than the demand. The right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary has told us that he is desirous of giving the owners the advantage of the services and aid of first-class managers—men of high skill and experience, who come under salaries of four figures. Now, we do not wish to deprive the owners in any way of the power of procuring the aid and services of such gentlemen; but the question is whether, if we pass the Bill in its present form, we shall not be giving unlimited power to a manager who may hold a certificate of competency only.

If that is all that we do, I question whether it will not have a directly contrary effect to that which is intended by the right hon. Gentleman. At present managers of high skill and practice have now under their management seven or eight collieries with 3,000 or 4,000 men. These collieries may be situated in three or four valleys, so that the managers are unable to visit each more than once a-week, or, perhaps, more than once in every eight or 10 days. But the redeeming feature is, that they have competent men under them at each colliery. If you change the present condition of things, I am afraid it will have this effect—that high-skilled men will be got rid of, and men holding certificates of competency will take the place of the high-skilled men, while men holding second-class certificates will supplant the men to whom you now award first-class certificates. That is exactly what we wish to avoid, and as I am confident that the right hon. Gentleman has no desire to reduce the competency of the management, I think if he had had practical experience of these matters, and knew what has been done in the past, he would regard all these questions in the same way that we regard them. We are afraid that if you give unlimited power, unless you can get an unlimited number of competent men, the condition of the miners will be worse than it is now. I believe that if the hon. Member for East Donegal and the Government consent to accept the Amendment of my hon. Friend the Member for the Normanton Division of Yorkshire the whole difficulty will be met. My hon. Friend proposes that there should be a daily personal supervision of the mine. Unless we attach the responsibility of daily supervision to the manager, such a state of things will certainly be brought about that the mines will be daily supervised by second-class instead of first-class men, and we should go back instead of forward in point of safety. I will ask the Home Secretary to consider this point; because I most certainly think that, unless some limitation is fixed, the clause will have a contrary effect to that which he desires it should have.

Mr. TOMLINSON (Preston): I think I express the feelings of the great mass of the colliery proprietors when I say that the last thing they desire is that, under this Bill, there should be any relaxation of the requirements in regard to the supervision of the managers. As far as I am acquainted with the collieries, the greatest pains are taken to secure thoroughly competent men. If it is disadvantageous to the men to have an incompetent manager, it is quite as disadvantageous to the colliery owners. Their desire is not to substitute second-class for first-class managers, but to supplement the first-class managers by men who have passed an examination that is calculated to show their fitness for the work. I think the last thing a colliery proprietor would desire would be to put an end to the employment of managers with first-class certificates, although I admit that a man may get a first-class certificate and yet be deficient in some useful qualities. I know some who are deficient in technical knowledge, and I know others whose technical knowledge is very considerable, but who, from other defects, are not fit to be trusted. In my part of the country I believe there is no particular objection to putting a reasonable limit upon the number of mines a man may superintend. In Lancashire no manager superintends more than a moderate number; but I believe there are other parts of the country where, as hon. Gentlemen opposite have pointed out, very great benefit would arise from the employment of superior men to superintend a larger number of collieries. By allowing the work of first-class managers to be supplemented by managers of the second-class we should, I think, be putting a really valuable class of men into a position of responsibility which they are perfectly qualified to take. But, as the hon. Member for Morpeth (Mr. Burt) has intimated, a difficulty might arise from first-class men being required. I certainly agree that the opinion which has been expressed that the adoption of the Amendment of the hon. Member for East Donegal would not increase the safety of the mine or the interest of the miners.

Mr. PICKARD (Yorkshire, W.R., Normanton): In reference to the suggestion which was made by the Home Secretary a short time ago, I may, perhaps, be allowed to remind him that what the Inspectors themselves generally say is that they do not desire to have anything to do with the management of the collieries, or to interfere in any way with it. I am inclined to believe that the Inspectors will hesitate before they take upon themselves any responsibility in connection with the internal management of the collieries. I believe that if a manager has a mine with 500 men employed in it, there is quite enough for him to do; and, therefore, I propose to move, as an Amendment to the Amendment of the hon. Member for East Donegal, to provide that no manager shall manage mines where more than 500 persons are employed, instead of 30, as proposed by the hon. Member. I hope the hon. Member will accept the number I suggest. I have no desire in any way whatever to harass the employers, but I think that if the Bill as it now stands is carried into law it will simply mean this—that the first-class certificated manager will be able to appoint under managers under himself; and in that case he would relieve himself of all personal responsibility if they committed any act of default, and personally it would be impossible to touch the chief manager under the provisions of the measure. I trust that the Home Secretary will be prepared to view the matter in the light we do. We believe that if a manager has under his supervision a mine with 500 persons employed in it there is quite sufficient work for a certificated manager to superintend daily, and know how the work is being done.

Amendment proposed, to the proposed Amendment, to leave out the word "thirty," in order to insert the words "five hundred."—(*Mr. Pickard.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'thirty' stand part of the proposed Amendment."

MR. MATTHEWS: I thought that we had arrived at an agreement upon this matter, and I was under the impression that the hon. Gentleman who has just spoken had accepted my suggestion. Some hon. Members expressed a desire to have four figure men, and no doubt it is very desirable to secure them. But you cannot get a "four-figure" man, if he is only to manage one pit in which there are no more than 500 men. You would not get a "four-figure" man to accept the management of a mine on such terms. The hon. Member for the Normanton Division seems to suppose that under the Bill as it stands the principal manager, who must have a first-class certificate, would exempt himself from responsibility by appointing under managers and throwing it upon them; but, if he will examine the Bill, he will find that that is not the case. Clause 22 expressly provides that the under manager shall hold a first or second-class certificate, and shall, in the absence of the manager, have the same responsibility, and be subject to the same liabilities, as the manager. It is no part of the object of the Bill to drive out of business the tip-top and first-class men, but, on the other hand, to leave an opening in the mine for deserving and skilful workmen. We propose no limit as to the number of mines or men a manager may have under his supervision; but we throw distinct responsibility upon the manager for everything connected with the management and supervision of every mine he manages. We believe that it is desirable, wherever the mine is large enough to secure the services of an engineer of first-class abilities; but, on the other hand, we have a second object—namely, that of allowing deserving workmen to have some share in the management of the mine. If the Committee think fit, later on, to say that every man who may be appointed an under-manager must have a first-class certificate as well as the head manager, well and good; but we are only dealing with the question now whether it is necessary or desirable to impose on the manager, who must have a first-class certificate, and who must be personally responsible, whether he has an under-manager or not, a limitation that he is not to have the control of more than 500 men employed underground. There may be several mines in a colliery employing more than 800 or 1,000 men, and I do not see why they should not be managed and supervised by an engineer of first-class calibre, seeing that he is made the responsible officer. I think that a hard-and-fast rule such as that suggested in the Amendment would lead to mischief.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: In deference to the opinion of my hon. Friend the Member for the Normanton Division (Mr. Pickard) I am ready to accept his Amendment to my Amendment. It is useless to disguise from oneself the fact that the interests of the coalowners and miners in this question are at issue.

Mr. MATTHEWS: Not a bit.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I am not concerned on one side or the other. I have been treating it, I believe, in a cold-blooded sort of way. It is perfectly plain that coalowners always endeavour to work their mines at the least possible expense, and to have as few managers and under managers as possible. That is only human nature. On the other hand, the miners and those who have an interest in the miners are anxious to secure the safety of life and limb. It is admitted that life and limb have not been properly secured in the past, and this Bill has been brought in to protect men who labour under such dangerous conditions. I believe that this question of management is one of the pivot points on which the whole thing turns. By insisting upon efficient management by competent men a large number of accidents will be prevented. It is well known that a large number of accidents have happened in the last 10 years which were preventible accidents. Efficient management, efficient superintendence, efficient inspection and control will go a long way towards saving human life and human suffering, and that is the object I had in moving the Amendment on the Paper. Now, the Amendment is altered so as to fix the limit at 500, instead of 30. What is the result? Simply this—that in all the large undertakings in which you have many hundreds of men employed—and there are many such—the extremely good men, whose salaries run into four figures—that is to say, who require at least £1,000 a-year in the shape of salary—can be employed where they are most wanted—namely, in the very large collieries; but you do not want such men for the smaller undertakings; and it is only a comparatively small portion of the managers who will look for these very large salaries. But there are plenty of large coal pits which are worth the sums which have been referred to; while there are a large number of the smaller coal pits which are not properly managed now, and if you adopt all the provisions of the scheme now submitted to the Committee, without amendment, what will you bring about? There may be a nominal manager in a very large district with not two, four, or 10, but, possibly, 20 or 50 pits or more under him, and in charge of each of these pits there will be an under manager, possessing comparatively inferior qualifications. You must not take it that all certificated managers are men of first-class abilities. Men may pass examinations, but their certificates are only service certificates, and are you to allow managers to be put in charge of an indefinite number of pits, with second-class men under them? That is the system you are establishing, and the highly skilled managers will be got rid of by those coalowners who are anxious to work on the most economical principle, and the miners will be exposed more than ever to the inefficient protection afforded by the supervision of badly qualified persons. I do not think the Home Secretary has advanced a single valid argument against the proposed Amendment to fix a limit of 500 men; and I trust that the Committee, in the interests of these unfortunate miners, who are constantly being sacrificed by hundreds, will step in and insist upon some such limitation being adopted.

Question put, and *negatived.*

Question, "That the words 'five hundred' be inserted in the proposed Amendment," put, and *agreed to.*

Question proposed, "That the words 'No person shall act as manager to more than one mine in which more than five hundred persons are employed below ground,' be there inserted."

Sir HUSSEY VIVIAN (Swansea District): I entirely disagree with the remarks which have just been made by the hon. Member for East Donegal. I must altogether challenge the conclusion that he has arrived at, that the interests of the owners and miners are different on this subject. I maintain that they are absolutely and entirely the same. [Mr. A. O'Connor dissented.] The hon. Member shakes his head. I do not know whether he is a coalowner. I have been connected with mines all my life, and it has been my misfortune, on one or two occasions, to have a serious accident in one of my mines. If the hon. Member knew the extent to which the feelings of the owner are harrowed upon such an occasion, I am quite certain that he would never have addressed the Committee in the way he has done. If the hon. Member could examine my books, he would from his last point of view—namely, the point of view of property—come to a different conclusion on this matter to that which he has stated to the Committee. The hon. Member is of opinion that owners of mines desire to work their mines at the least possible cost, and that, as a result, they employ inefficient men. I should like to know whether a mine could be worked at the least possible expense by having inefficient men in it? My opinion is that the loss which would occur would enormously outbalance any possible saving there would be in the wages of one man, as compared with the wages of another. If you want to work at the lowest possible cost, the best course is to get the best possible agent that you can. There was one most extraordinary point in the hon. Member's speech—namely, that you did not require the best man to work the small mines. Now, I maintain that you do want the best men to work the small mines. I am prepared to say that more accidents occur in small mines than in large ones. My point is that you should bring all mines up to the standard of the best work; that you should not lower the standard of the men who work even the smallest mines, because a great mischief occurs even in small mines. No man can go underground without having his life in his hands more or less; and, therefore, I want every one to be managed by the best men you can get. If I thought this Amendment would lead up to your having a better man in every mine, then I should vote for it; but I do not think that that would be the effect if the Committee were to agree to it. You want a thoroughly good man in the daily management of every mine, and that, as far as I am able to read the 22nd clause, this Bill will compel you to have; but what you also want is the guiding hand of the very best man you can get. I know from practical experience in connection with very large collieries that you want the guiding hand of a superior man to lay out the workings properly, and to be in daily charge of the colliery—men who understand their duty and discharge it properly. Depend upon it, if you pass such an Amendment as this, and take away from the owner the power of having the best possible man he can get to take charge of the mine and be responsible for its management and supervision, you will run great risk of doing more harm than good. I quite agree that it is not desirable to have a manager to supervise a larger number of mines than he could be fairly expected to look after; but if you take away from the owner the power of obtaining the services of a superior man you will run great risk of endangering the safety of the pits.

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES (Durham, N.W.): I think the difficulty might be met by adopting the suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary, that every mine should be under the daily supervision of a person holding a first-class certificate. I fully agree with what the hon. Baronet (Sir Hussey Vivian) has just said, that it is necessary to have over a mine the guiding hand of the best man you can get, and it is because I think that the clause in its present shape does not secure that object that I wish to support either the Amendment of my hon. Friend, or the suggested Amendment of the Home Secretary. What is the fact at the present time? Under this Bill, when it becomes law, there will be a first-class certificated manager who may have the control of any number of mines, and it would be extremely undesirable that the guiding counsel of such men should be lost to the miners of the country. But, at the same time, you can have appointed an under manager, holding a second-class certificate, and that under manager may be a very inferior person. In one respect the Home Secretary is wrong when he states that the manager is still made responsible. If he will turn to Clause 66, he will there find that the fullest protection is afforded to the chief manager; because all he has to say when he is summoned for an offence under the Act is that he appointed a perfectly competent person holding a second-class certificate, and therefore took reasonable means to prevent the commission of an offence. Therefore, all the responsibility is taken away as far as the head manager is concerned. I do not think that any good purpose can be served by protracting this debate, and I trust the Home Secretary will put in the form of an Amendment the suggestion he has made, and in that case I hope my hon. Friend (Mr. Pickard) will withdraw his Amendment.

Mr. BURT: I have no intention of continuing the discussion; but the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary has more than once referred to the proceedings of the conference we had upstairs. I am sorry that any difference should have arisen between the right hon. Gentleman and us. I certainly understood the right hon. Gentleman that with regard to the proposition which was made upstairs, it was to be left open for discussion in Committee. No definite agreement whatever was entered into.

Mr. PICKARD: It was pointed out at the meeting upstairs that if Clause 51 remains as it is now, a certificated manager will be able to get out of all responsibility as far as his work is concerned. Under that clause, if he publishes the rules and other necessary information, no responsibility whatever will be attached to him. All he has to do is to prove that he has taken all reasonable means of publishing, and to the best of his power enforcing, the rules and regulations for the working of the mine.

Mr. MATTHEWS: I myself thought that the words at the end of Section 22 would place the manager, even if he had an under manager, in a different position from anybody else. Certainly the clause was drawn with the intention of preventing the manager from undertaking too much, and of making him liable, even if he had an under manager who might be considered to be a competent man, for anything that went wrong. If the chief manager is undertaking too much, and is prevented from giving a daily personal supervision to the mine, even although he trusts to the under manager, his responsibility remains just the same. That was what was intended by these words, and they were inserted in the clause with that object. I thought we had placed the best possible check on the manager to prevent him from undertaking too much.

Mr. FENWICK: If hon. Members will turn to Clause 51, they will see that the latter part of it reads—

> "Unless he proves that he had taken all reasonable means, by publishing and, to the best of his power, enforcing the said rules as regulations for the working of the mine, to prevent such contravention or non-compliance."

So that all he has got to show is that he has taken the trouble to publish or enforce the rules. Clause 66 provides—

> "No prosecution shall be instituted against the owner, agent, or manager of a mine for any offence under this Act, not committed personally by such owner, agent, or manager, which can be prosecuted before a Court of Summary Jurisdiction, except by an Inspector, or with the consent in writing of a Secretary of State; and in the case of any offence of which the owner, agent, or manager of a mine is not guilty, if he proves that he had taken all reasonable means to prevent the commission thereof, an Inspector shall not institute any prosecution against such owner or manager, if satisfied that he had taken such reasonable means as aforesaid."

I think it will be found that those two clauses completely destroy the good intentions which the Government seem to have had in mind when they framed Clause 22. If the right hon. Gentleman will undertake, on the lines he has just indicated, to alter Clauses 51 and 66, I think it is very likely that the difficulty might be got over; but, as those two clauses now stand, the object with which the right hon. Gentleman says this clause was framed is altogether nullified.

Mr. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.W.): I do not think it is desirable to waste further time in this discussion; but I hope the hon. Member for East Donegal (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) will press the Amendment to a Division. I may say that as far as the Scotch miners are concerned, unless the Bill undergoes very material amendment, they will not care for it at all.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: The Act of 1872 provides that every mine should be under the daily control and supervision of a competent and efficient manager; but the fact is that in South Staffordshire there is a large area, in which there may be a dozen collieries, over which one manager has the nominal control, and consequently his personal responsibility is frittered away. I do not see how you could fix him with personal responsibility when you know that it is physically impossible for him to have been at a mine, and when you have allowed him to have an under manager under him. In such a case the responsibility must rest on the under manager.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): After listening to what has been urged by the hon. Member for the Normanton

Division (Mr. Pickard) and the hon. Member for East Donegal (Mr. Arthur O'Connor), I am rather of opinion that the manager may escape by showing that he had taken all reasonable means to publish and have the rules enforced. Clause 51, however, is very vague, and I would ask if it is meant to apply to the general rules contained in the section preceding? If that is so, at all events the Bill does not say so, and it should be made clear.

COLONEL BLUNDELL (Lancashire, S.W., Ince): I do not think it is at all desirable that there should be any diminution in the number of first-class managers, and if there were none but large collieries there would be no necessity for a second-class under manager at all. When several small collieries are grouped under one first-class manager it is necessary to have a resident under manager at each.

MR. YEO (Glamorgan, Gower): It appears to me that in our anxiety to give more protection to the miners we are running the risk of depriving them of the protection they now enjoy. As the collieries are now carried on, you have a first-class manager, who is a superior man, to give general directions, who is able to deal with the mine in a way in which a man with less superior attainments would be unable to deal with it. It appears to me that you are now going to decide that every colliery should only have one manager. [*Cries of* "No!"] I rose rather for the purpose of pressing upon the Committee the desirability of accepting the suggestion which fell from the Home Secretary. I think that the Mover of the Amendment has taken an exaggerated view of the duties which would devolve on the mining Inspector in carrying out that suggestion. We have been told by the hon. Member for Morpeth (Mr. Burt) that in his experience the miners—who are fully alive to their own interests—have never brought forward this question. There has been no complaint that the colleries are not managed with sufficient care, and with due regard to their safety. I think we may take it that that is so, seeing that the number of complaints have been very few indeed. Therefore I think the suggestion of the Home Secretary might be adopted, and the Inspector be empowered to take into consideration the management of a mine in a case where the collieries have expressed dissatisfaction either in regard to the manager in giving sufficient attention to it, or attempting to do too much. If such a complaint arose, there could be no harm in referring the matter to the Home Secretary, who would deal with it, and bring the manager who was acting so unwisely to book. I trust that that suggestion will be adopted by the Committee, and that the hon. Gentleman who has moved the Amendment will withdraw it. I am persuaded that if it is accepted it will act in a direction altogether opposite to that which the hon. Member desires to move.

MR. MATTHEWS: Section 51 only applies to the rules. It is a most sweeping section which makes the manager liable if any person violates any of the general rules. It has nothing whatever to do with Section 22. As to Clause 66, that is another question; but I confess that I do not think that it can have any application to Section 22.

MR. BRADLAUGH: Will the right hon. Gentleman, when he comes to Section 51, so amend it as to show that it does not mean the general rules in the preceding section? because it is capable of being construed to apply to every rule, and every provision and regulation in connection with the men.

MR. MASON (Lanark, Mid): I think there is a general wish that this discussion should close. I quite agree that the manager who is to be appointed to take charge of a colliery should be a first-class man. I would ask if it would meet the views of the hon. Member for the Normanton Division (Mr. Pickard) to say that no certificated manager shall have more than 500 men under his control at one time.

Question put.

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 89; Noes 132: Majority 43.—(Div. List, No. 376.)

Amendment proposed, in page 11, line line 7, after "managers," insert "name and."—(*Mr. Tomlinson.*)

Question, "That those words be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 22 (Daily supervision of mine by manager or under manager).

MR. PICKARD (York, W.R., Normanton), in moving as an Amendment, in page 11, line 15, after "daily" to insert the word "personal," said, the object was to provide that—

> "Any other mine under the control of a certificated manager daily personal supervision shall be exercised either by the manager or by the under manager, nominated in writing by the owner or agent of the mine."

Amendment proposed, in page 11, line 15, after the word "daily" to insert the word "personal."—(*Mr. Pickard.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'personal' be there inserted."

Mr. MATTHEWS: I have no objection to the Amendment.

Amendment *agreed to.*

Mr. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith) moved, in page 11, line 17, after "owner" leave out "or," and after agent insert "manager," with the object of providing that the daily personal supervision shall be exercised either by the manager, or by an under agent nominated in writing by the owner, agent, or "manager" of the mine. The hon. Gentleman said—The effect of the Amendment is to enable the manager to nominate the under manager, which by the clause, as it stands, can only be done by the owner or agent. I would only point out that the owner may be absent from the mine, and it is perfectly possible that the agent may be absent also, and that the manager is not able to give daily personal supervision to all the mine under his charge. No harm would therefore be done if the manager were empowered to appoint the under manager, especially as it is provided in the 2nd section of the clause that the person nominated under manager must hold either a 1st or 2nd class certificate, and the personal responsibility of the manager under the Act is not to be diminished. I think my Amendment is in the direction of the suggestion of the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) in the event of Section 66 being held to override Section 22.

Amendment proposed, in page 11, line 17, after the word "owner," leave out "or."—(*Mr. J. W. Lowther.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'or' stand part of the Clause."

Mr. TOMLINSON (Preston): I do not think that the power should be extended to the manager. It is better that the clause should remain as it stands.

Sir JOSEPH PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): If the hon. Member will turn to the Interpretation Clause, he will find it there stated that the term—

> "Agent, when used in relation to any mine, means any person having, on behalf of the owner, care or direction of any mine, or of any part thereof, and superior to a manager appointed in pursuance of this Act."

Mr. MATTHEWS: I am afraid that the Government cannot accept the Amendment.

Mr. J. W. LOWTHER: Then I will not press it.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I would ask the Home Secretary if he has any objection to require a manager who has the supervision of a mine to enter in a book for the supervision of the Inspector the amount of supervision he has exercised, together with the dates of his visit and other particulars.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member can raise that question at the end of the clause.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Mr. TOMLINSON: I have to move a provision at the end of the clause, that—

> "The manager and under manager of a mine under this Act shall at all times be exempt from serving as jurors at any court of inquiry whatsoever."

These managers are required by the Statute to be at their post, and it is rather hard in such a case that they should be required to perform public duties which must necessarily take them away. I know that the important duties of jurors must be performed; but I think that when you require a man to exercise a daily supervision over a mine, it is most undesirable that you should diminish his responsibility by taking him away in order that he may perform some other duty.

Amendment proposed,

In page 11, line 23, at end add "the manager and under manager of a mine under this Act shall at all times be exempt from serving as jurors at any court or any inquiry whatsoever."—(*Mr. Tomlinson.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

Mr. MATTHEWS: I hope that my hon. and learned Friend will not press this Amendment. It is one which the Government cannot accept. The managers of coal mines never have been exempt, and I see no reason why they should be so. I hope Amendments of this sort, relating to a variety of subjects unconnected with the regulation of coal mines, will not be pressed. I notice that there are a variety of Amendments of this nature on the Paper relating to Coroners' juries, the law of Scotland with the juries Act, and weights and measures, and other matters, which are altogether irrelevant to the object of the Bill.

Mr. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I hope the hon. and learned Member for Preston will press the Amendment. Considering that this is a Bill intended to secure life and property in mines, it is our duty to take every step we can to see that the responsibility of the manager shall be a real responsibility. If the Bill errs in anything, it errs in not laying down distinctly and precisely what the duties of the manager are to be. It would simply indicate how important we consider that his duties are, if we include in the Bill a provision that he shall not serve upon a jury. Where a person acts as a baillee, and discharges the duty of seeing that life and limb are preserved, he is always exempted from serving upon a jury. Take, for instance, a physician or a surgeon. It seems to me that the duty of a manager in providing for the safety of the mine, is in every respect as important as that of a surgeon or physician. Although we are not required to define the duties of a manager we can do so negatively, by providing that he shall not be required to serve on a jury. I look upon the Amendment as a very important one, and I hope that the hon. and learned Member will persevere with it.

Sir JOSEPH PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): If a manager is not to serve on a jury, of course someone will have to serve in his place. I do not know why the manager of a mine should be deprived of a holiday, or why he should be considered free from attacks of illness, and always at the mine engaged in the discharge of his duties. If he happened to be sick, I presume that somebody else would have to supply his place. We all know that it is not a pleasant duty to be required to serve on a jury; but it is a duty which most of us have to perform for the good of the State, and it is unreasonable to expect the manager of a mine to perform daily duty at the colliery without a holiday or without paying regard to any of the casualties of life. There must be, therefore, arrangements to fulfil the duties of an absent manager. When we remember the number of persons who are already exempted from serving on juries, I think it will be agreed that it is not desirable to add to the list, because somebody has to serve on the jury in the place of every man who is exempted.

Mr. TOMLINSON: With the leave of the Committee I will withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I wish to learn from the Home Secretary, whether he proposes to take steps to secure that the supervision of the manager is real and regular. In order to do that, I think it would be necessary that a book should be kept in the mine, in which the manager should be compelled to enter the date of his visits and certain details for the information of the Inspector, in order that some security may be afforded that managers who have several mines under their care, do in fact give a personal supervision and exercise personal control in each of the mines in their charge.

Mr. MATTHEWS: I understand the hon. Member to want a book kept at every mine in every colliery, in which more than 30 persons are employed, and that in such book the manager shall enter the amount of daily supervision he has given to the mine. If the hon. Gentleman will allow me, I will consider that suggestion between this and the Report, without, however, pledging myself to the adoption of any particular course. It must be remembered that there is an excessive amount of work already in some of these mines, and particularly in the small mines. The hon. Member must allow me to take the advice of others who are thoroughly conversant with the matter.

Mr. BRADLAUGH: I would further suggest that the right hon. Gentleman should also consider, between this and the Report, whether, in reference to Clause 66, he will include in that clause some provision that it shall not override Clause 22, or meet it here by using some such words as these—"Any provision in Clause 66 notwithstanding."

Mr. MATTHEWS: Certainly; I will take care to do so. It was always meant that the manager should be made liable for the complete supervision and control of the mine, just as if there was no one else in it.

Sir JOHN SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield): I wish to move an Amendment to provide that no first-class certificated manager shall have control at any one time of more than 2,500 men.

Amendment proposed, in page 11, after line 23, add—(3.) "That no first-class certificated manager should have control, at any one time, of more than two thousand five hundred men."—(*Sir John Swinburne.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

Mr. MATTHEWS: This Amendment involves a question which has already been discussed at considerable length; and I must confess that the Amendment itself is not very intelligible as it stands. It would follow, from the words of the Amendment, that a colliery with 2,501 men should have no management at all.

Mr. CHANCE: Not at all.

Mr. MATTHEWS: I presume the hon. Baronet means that a manager who has a colliery in his charge in which 2,500 men are employed, shall not be allowed to take any other mine under his care. But that is a matter which has already been discussed at great length.

Mr. CHANCE: I think the Amendment is perfectly clear. It does not limit the size of any colliery over which a manager is to have charge; but it says that no first class certificated manager shall have charge at one time of collieries at which more than 2,500 men are employed.

The CHAIRMAN: The words moved by the hon. Member are—

> "That no first-class certificated manager shall have control, at any one time, of more than 2,500 men."

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: As the Amendment stands on the Paper, it is—

> "That no first-class certificated manager shall have control, at any one time, of collieries consisting of more than 6 drawing pits, or employing more than 2,500 men."

Mr. Bradlaugh

With the omission now made, the Amendment is quite inadmissible; because if 3,000 men were employed in a pit, it would be incumbent upon the owner to appoint a second manager, and bring about a divided responsibility.

Mr. CHANCE: The addition of the words "except in one colliery" would meet the difficulty.

Sir JOHN SWINBURNE: I shall be glad to accept that Amendment.

Amendment proposed to proposed Amendment, to add at the end thereof the words "except in one colliery."

Question, "That those words be there added," put, and *negatived.*

Original Amendment put, and *negatived.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 23 (Contractor for mineral, &c., disqualified for post of manager or under manager) *agreed to.*

Clause 24 (Constitution of Board for appointing examiners for granting certificates of competency to managers and under managers).

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I desire to move a portion of an Amendment which stands in the name of the hon. Member for North Kilkenny (Mr. Marum)—

> "That for the purposes of this Act, holders of service certificates appointed managers since the 31st of December, 1875, shall be deemed second-class managers only."

At present there are different kinds of certificated managers, who, having proved themselves competent and skilled workmen, have passed an examination, and have received certificates of competency. Some of them are the best men you have, and they are men who, before the passing of the Act of 1875, had had a certain amount of service.

The CHAIRMAN: I must ask the hon. Member where he proposes that this Amendment should come in?

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: At the end of line 30.

The CHAIRMAN: Then the hon. Member for Morpeth has an Amendment on the Paper upon the same point which will come first.

Mr. BURT: I have to move an Amendment which provides that—

> "No person shall be entitled to a certificate under this Act unless he shall have had practical experience in a mine for at least five years."

While in favour of scientific training, I certainly attach equal importance to practical experience in mining, and I think that every man holding a certificate should have had such practical experience. Upon this subject I may mention that the coalowners are quite in agreement with the miners, and therefore it is unnecessary to say more in regard to it.

Amendment proposed,

In page 11, line 30, after "under manager," insert "but no person shall be entitled to a certificate under this Act unless he shall have had practical experience in a mine for at least five years."—(*Mr. Burt.*)

Question, "That those words be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I have now to move an Amendment to provide that certificates of competency under the Act of 1872 shall be deemed to be first-class certificates, and that certificates of service under the same Act shall only be deemed to be second-class certificates. I do not think there is anybody who will be likely to challenge the principle involved in the Amendment. Those who have already obtained certificates of competency would remain first-class certificated managers; but those who obtained certificates from service only would be second-class certificated managers. That is in accordance with the scheme of the Bill itself, and it would secure that those men who at present have service certificates should receive second-class certificates only.

Amendment proposed,

At the end of the clause to add the words "certificates of competency under the Coal Mines Act of 1872 shall be deemed to be first-class certificates, and certificates under the same Act shall be deemed to be second-class certificates."—(*Mr. Arthur O'Connor.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

Mr. TOMLINSON (Preston): I believe that some of the best managers we have are the service men, and therefore I hope the Amendment will not be adopted. The Act of 1872 for the first time introduced the principle of examination, and men who were managing collieries at that date, and are still managing them were allowed to have service certificates. I challenge any hon. Member to say that these managers are not among the best men we have.

Mr. MATTHEWS: I hope the Amendment will not be pressed. Will the hon. Member consider for a moment what he is proposing? He proposes to alter the statutory position of men who have obtained certificates of service under the Act of 1872 which made them first-class certificated managers, and to relegate them to another, and inferior position. This would inflict great injustice and hardship upon a very valuable class of men.

Mr. BARNES (Derbyshire, Chesterfield): I would also urge the withdrawal of the Amendment. The managers who have obtained service certificates are a very hard-working class.

Mr. BURT: When I first saw this Notice on the Paper I felt inclined to support it; but as it stood in the name of the hon. Member for North Kilkenny it was confined to Ireland, and I presumed that the Irish Members were best acquainted with their own affairs, and that was the ground upon which I should have been induced to support it. Now, however, it is intended to be applied to the whole country, and I certainly do not intend to support it. I entirely agree with the remarks which have been made that some of the managers who have service certificates are among the most competent men we have, and I, for one, should be very much disinclined to do anything, either directly or indirectly, to degrade or throw a stigma upon them. I therefore hope my hon. Friend will withdraw the Amendment.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: After the opinion my hon. Friend the Member for Morpeth has expressed, I shall certainly not press the Amendment. At the same time, I cannot help thinking that it is absolutely necessary to provide some safeguard for the lives of the men employed in the mine; and we should insist upon the highest qualifications being possessed by those who take upon themselves the responsibility of supervising the work. Many of the service managers are men who may have had a good deal of practice and experience, but are very often incompetent to deal with such questions as the ventilation of the mine. I do not say that there are not exceptionally able men among the holders of service certificates, and men of the highest efficiency, but a large number of the service certificate holders are not men who ought to be entrusted with the responsible position of first-class certificated manager.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I have now to propose the insertion, in line 37, after "persons," the words "or three agents of any person." I move the Amendment in consequence of representations which have been made to me on behalf of the miners of Somersetshire and West Gloucestershire. The Amendment provides that examiners for granting certificates of competency to managers and under managers shall consist, among others, of three persons "or three agents of any persons" employed in or about any mine in any specified part of the United Kingdom not being owners' agents or managers of a mine.

Amendment proposed, in page 11, line 37, after the word "persons," insert the words "or three agents of any persons."—(*Mr. Sexton.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. MATTHEWS: I am afraid I cannot accept the Amendment. The whole principle of the Board is that the working element should be represented upon it, and not the miners' agents. What I want is to bring to the practical knowledge of the working men what the subjects of examination are. All the various elements are to be represented —namely, the owners, the workmen, the agents, and one Inspector.

Mr. SEXTON: Perhaps I may be allowed to quote a passage from a letter written to me by the agent of the miners of Somersetshire and West Gloucestershire. He says that one reason for desiring the insertion of these words is that the persons employed in or about mines are not always free agents, and they may be liable to make mistakes. He therefore thinks it would be better that miners' agents, who are not subjected to Boycotting, should be upon the Board.

Mr. MATTHEWS: The clause, as I have said, already make provisions for the appointment of free agents—namely, owners, workmen, mining engineers, agents, managers or coal viewers, and one Inspector.

Mr. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck): What objection could the Home Secretary fairly have to secretaries of miners' unions acting as examiners on the Board? They are allowed to act in that capacity at present, and they form some of the most efficient examiners we have on these Boards. The remarks of the right hon. Gentlemen are, in my opinion, insulting to these men, and I hope he will withdraw them. If the miners are not to be allowed to elect men to be examiners on the Board in whom they have every confidence, who by their ability have forced their way to the head of their fellows, then I say the Board of Examiners will be a mere sham. I trust the right hon. Gentleman will withdraw the remark he made in reference to the miners' agents.

Mr. MATTHEWS: I had no desire to say anything that was in the least degree offensive. Surely there can be nothing insulting to the secretary of a miners' union in desiring that working miners should be appointed on the Board. The clause provides that examiners shall be appointed by a Board consisting of certain persons selected from certain classes, and one of them is the working men. I did not say one word that could be offensive or insulting to the hon. Gentleman. All I wanted to point out was that among the valuable elements in the clause were the working men. The agent is the representative of the owner, and may not be a free agent; but in addition to mining engineers' agents, managers of mines, and coal viewers, there are to be agents of the working men. There is nothing in the clause to prevent the secretary of a workmen's union, if employed in a mine, from being nominated to the Board.

Mr. FENWICK: The secretaries of the miners' societies may not be actually working in the mine at present; but they have previously worked in a mine, and they are chosen by the miners for their trustworthiness and fitness to represent them. Such men ought not to be excluded because they are not actually working in a mine. Yet the right hon. Gentleman would exclude them because they are not actually, at the moment, working in a mine, although they may have had—and in all probability have had—considerable experience as working miners in a mine. That was the expression used by the right hon. Gentleman which I objected to.

Sir JOSEPH PEASE: I agree with a remark which fell from the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh). I think the clause does not carry out the right hon. Gentleman's views. It ought to be "persons employed or having been employed in or about any mine." A miner's secretary is not working in a mine, and, however suitable, he would be ineligible. I do not think he would come under the words "mining agents." The agents of the mine are the agents of the owners. There are undoubtedly many men among the mining community who are well qualified to perform this function.

Mr. MATTHEWS: I will accept the words suggested by the hon. Baronet.

Mr. SEXTON: In that case I will withdraw my Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Amendment proposed, in page 11, line 37, after "employed," insert "or who have been employed."—(*Sir Joseph Pease.*)

Question, "That those words be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

Mr. ATHERLEY-JONES (Durham, N.W.): I wish to propose an Amendment which stands in the name of the hon. Member for the Bishop's Auckland Division of Durham (Mr. Paulton), although it seems to me that the words are only necessary for the purpose of making the words still clearer. The Amendment provides that the workmen's examiners shall be three persons employed "as workmen" in or about a mine.

Amendment proposed, in page 11, line 37, after "employed," insert "as workmen."—(*Mr. Atherley-Jones.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. TOMLINSON: The words are unnecessary, and I hope they will not be pressed.

Mr. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith): On the contrary, I believe that some words to this effect are necessary, and I had placed an Amendment on the Paper for the purpose of securing that the workmen appointed upon the Board should be men of practical experience, so far as the underground working of a mine is concerned.

Sir JOSEPH PEASE: I am afraid that if you put in words of this kind you may interfere with the object of the clause, which is to secure the services of the best men, and you might exclude such men as a deputy or overman. I think the negative form is better than a positive one.

Mr. ATHERLEY-JONES: My own view is that the words are unnecessary, and after the opinion I have elicited, and the absence of any opinion from my hon. Friends below the Gangway, I will withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Mr. DONALD CRAWFORD (Lanark, N.E.): I have now to move a small Amendment of which I have not given Notice. I think it is undesirable that the members of the Board should be a permanent body, and accordingly I propose, in the first line of page 12, to add the words—"The Members of the Board shall be appointed for three years." It will be observed that the Board is not to be elected, but is to be appointed, and may be removed by the Secretary of State. As there may be some members nominated by the miners, others by the owners, others by mining engineers, managers, or coal viewers, and one by the Inspector under the Act, there is a possibility that the members might not work well together, but would get into a ruck. I think it is desirable, therefore, that every three years there should be an opportunity of changing the constitution of the Board, and of infusing new blood into it.

Amendment proposed, in page 12, line 1, after "appointed," insert "for three years."—(*Mr. Donald Crawford.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. MATTHEWS: I understand the object of the hon. Member to be the renewal of the Board from time to time; but that object is already attained, although it need not necessarily be enforced by the words of the clause as they stand, because they provide that—

> "The members of the Board shall be appointed and may be removed by a Secretary of State, and shall only hold office during his pleasure."

Every three months, instead of three years, the Board may be renewed if it is thought desirable. Therefore, I do not think the Amendment is necessary. The Board can be renewed now more frequently than the adoption of these words would compel them to be renewed.

Mr. DONALD CRAWFORD: That is a technical answer to the Amendment; but the right hon. Gentleman knows very well that the words I propose would make a substantial difference. The indication would be that these were appointments during pleasure; but for all practical purposes they would be permanent, and I do not think it is desirable that that should be the case.

Mr. WARMINGTON (Monmouth, W.): I would suggest that the object of my hon. Friend would be better expressed by providing that no person should be a member of the Board for more than three years.

Mr. PICKARD: I would support that suggestion. Unless something of the sort is done, I am afraid that, however objectionable a man may be, and however unfit to discharge the duties of the office, it may be found impossible to remove him. I know of one instance in which the person appointed on the Examination Board for the execution of the Act was the actual manager of a mine; but we could never get him removed from the Board, although more than one appeal was made to the Inspector.

Sir JOSEPH PEASE: Perhaps it might obviate the difficulty raised by the right hon. Gentleman if the words "without re-appointment" were added.

Mr. MATTHEWS: No; I am afraid I cannot accept the Amendment.

Question put, and *negatived.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 25 (Proceedings and powers of board for appointing examiners).

Mr. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith): The object of the Amendment I have to propose is to provide in the 2nd sub-section that the examiners, who are not to be members of the Board except with the consent of the Secretary of State, "shall be holders of first-class certificates under this Act." I think it is most desirable that the examiners appointed should be first-rate men, and to secure that they ought to be holders of first-class certificates. As a matter of fact, many of them are holders of first-class certificates; but I do not think any harm will be done by inserting this requirement in the clause.

Mr. Matthews

Amendment proposed, in page 12, line 8, after "State," insert "who shall be holders of first-class certificates under this Act."—(*Mr. J. W. Lowther.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. MATTHEWS: I think that that object is already provided for by another Amendment, which proposes that any person, before he can obtain a first-class certificate, must have worked for five years underground.

Mr. J. W. LOWTHER: I put down the Amendment with the view of providing that the examiners should be men who had a practical acquaintance with the working of a mine; but as the right hon. Gentleman has accepted another Amendment to provide that the men appointed shall have been working underground for five years, I beg to withdraw it.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Clause *agreed to.*

Clause 26 (Rules by Secretary of State as to examination).

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): It will be observed that in this clause reference is made to one of the Schedules at the end of the Bill. It says that the fees to be made by the applicants shall not exceed those specified in Schedule 2. Turning to Schedule 2, on page 47, I find that the fees are not specified for the second-class certificate. I will, therefore, ask the right hon. Gentleman what he proposes to insert for such fees, and also what steps he proposes to take to secure that examination shall be held with reasonable frequency? The reason why I ask these questions is that it has already been provided in Clause 21, Sub-section B, that—

> "If for any reasonable cause there is for the time being no manager of a mine qualified as required by this section, the owner or agent of the mine may appoint any competent person not holding a certificate under this Act to be manager for a period not exceeding two months or such longer period as may elapse before such person has an opportunity in the district wherein the mine is situate of obtaining by examination a certificate under this Act, and shall send to the Inspector of the district a written notice of the manager's address, and of the reason for his appointment."

That is to say, that the Bill already contemplates an indefinite period elapsing before an examination is held in the district in which the mine is situated. Is it therefore intended that in every district there shall be examinations held in view of the possibility of prolonged vacancies and persons of imperfect qualification being in charge of the mine. I want to know what steps the right hon. Gentleman proposes to take in order to secure frequent examination?

MR. MATTHEWS: The times of holding the examinations are regulated in the Bill, and the rules are perfectly clear and distinct. If the hon. Member will look at Schedule No. 1, which applies to the proceedings of Boards of Examination, he will see that the terms of the old Act are followed. The Board is made altogether independent of the Secretary of State; it has an independent authority outside the Home Office altogether; and the Home Secretary has no control over its proceedings. It is left to the Board to fix the examination and to settle the qualifications of candidates. I have heard no complaint whatever as to the examinations not having been held with sufficient frequency. The hon. Member appears to think that the words in the Bill are new; but that is not so, and I never heard of any delay in carrying out examinations in any district. All the Secretary of State can do is to inspect the minutes of the proceedings of the examiners, or to authorize some person to inspect and copy them.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: The examiners give their services gratuitously, and there is no inducement to them to take unnecessary trouble.

MR. BURT: On this point I should like to direct the attention of the right hon. Gentleman to a complaint I received a few days ago from the neighbourhood of Leeds, which was quite new to me. A working man informed me that it was exceedingly difficult—indeed almost impossible—for a working miner to be examined for a manager's certificate. The impression seems to have got abroad that the person to be examined must be possessed of some official experience as a deputy or something of that kind. I would therefore ask if it is possible to insert words in the Bill to provide distinctly that a working miner may be examined for a certificate as manager?

MR. PICKARD: I hope, on the Report, that the Home Secretary will put words into the Bill to make this matter as intelligible to the working miner as possible.

MR. MATTHEWS: It has been the intention of the Government to provide that the examination should not be one that should depend upon scholarship, but confined to technical knowledge, skill, and efficiency, and I think it may be found desirable to add some words to this section. I will promise to introduce words to make it certain that the second-class certificate shall be one which working men may be able to obtain.

MR. TOMLINSON: Perhaps the object would be best accomplished by a distinct rule.

Clause *agreed to.*

Clause 27 (Grant of certificates to applicants on passing examination) *agreed to.*

Clause 28 (Inquiry into competency of manager and cancellation of certificate in case of unfitness).

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES (Durham, N.W.): I have to move an Amendment, in Sub-section 1, to leave out the words "Metropolitan Police Magistrate." The clause provides that the inquiry shall be public and shall be held at such place as the Secretary of State may appoint, by a County Court Judge, Metropolitan Police Magistrate, Stipendiary Magistrate or other person or persons, as may be directed by the Secretary of State, either alone or with the assistance of an assessor or assessors. The reason why I propose to exclude a Metropolitan Police Magistrate is that I think the most desirable person to conduct the inquiry is a man who has had some acquaintance with and experience of mining cases. Further than that, I think it is objectionable to remove the Metropolitan Magistrates from the performance of their ordinary duties. The Government have not always been happy in the persons they have sent down to conduct these inquiries, and they have undoubtedly in many cases appointed gentlemen who have given much dissatisfaction in the mining districts to which they have been sent. I think a Stipendiary Magistrate acting in a colliery district is the proper person to appoint, acting in conjunction with any other person the Home Secretary may select. In the interests of the administration of justice in the mining districts, and in the interests of the inquiry itself, it is undesirable that a Metropolitan Police Magistrate should be sent down.

Amendment proposed, page 13, line 3, leave out the words "Metropolitan Police Magistrate." — (*Mr. Atherley-Jones.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

Mr. MATTHEWS: I cannot accept the Amendment, which would introduce a perfectly novel principle.

Mr. ATHERLEY-JONES: Then I will not press it.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Mr. ATHERLEY-JONES: I beg to propose to insert, after the word "case," page 13, in line 11—

"The Inspector or other person who may make such representation as aforesaid may attend the inquiry by himself, counsel, or agent, and examine and cross-examine any witness."

Every facility is afforded to a manager to cross-examine witnesses, and I apprehend to address the Court, but no such facilities are afforded to the person who makes a complaint, be he Inspector or otherwise. It is obviously undesirable that the only person who has the conduct of the case should be an official sent down by the Home Office; it is most desirable that the workmen should have an opportunity afforded them, if they are disposed to avail themselves of it, of instructing some person to represent them who would adequately put forward the grievances which they may have; and it is also desirable that the Inspector, if he takes up the case, should not be altogether identified with the Government official sent down, but that he should have the means afforded him of instructing, if he so pleases, counsel or an attorney to represent him. This is obviously fair, and I may say that other Acts of Parliament which deal with inquiries of a cognate nature contain provisions to this effect. I hope the Home Secretary will see his way to accept this Amendment.

Amendment proposed,

In page 13, line 11, after the word "case," insert the words "the Inspector or other person who may make such representation as aforesaid may attend the inquiry by himself, counsel, or agent, and examine and cross-examine any witness."—(*Mr. Atherley-Jones.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. MATTHEWS: I am not quite sure I appreciate the hon. Member's object. Sub-section 3 provides that the Secretary of State may appoint some person to undertake the management of the case. I thought, at first, that the hon. Member's impression was that without express words the prosecutor should not have counsel or agent.

Mr. ATHERLEY-JONES: I think it is most desirable that the person by whom the complaint shall be made shall, if he pleases, be able to instruct counsel.

Mr. MATTHEWS: Then I must object to the Amendment because I think this is a penal proceeding against the manager, and it is only intended to be instituted upon the authority of the Secretary of State.

Mr. ATHERLEY-JONES: This is a question of procedure, and I suggest that when once an inquiry has been instituted on the mandate of the Secretary of State, it shall be open to the person who makes the complaint, and who is the actual prosecutor, to be represented by counsel, if he desires to be so represented.

Mr. MATTHEWS: The Secretary of State is the actual prosecutor, and he acts upon information supplied to him, and takes upon himself the responsibility of saying that such and such a manager is grossly incompetent or negligent.

Question put, and *negatived.*

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): The Amendment which stands in my name, having reference to the auditing of costs, or the fixing of costs in Scotland, is, as I am informed by the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald), redundant to the extent of one word, the word "ordinary." I therefore propose to move the Amendment without the word "ordinary."

Amendment proposed, in page 13, line 44, after "Courts," insert "or in Scotland to the Auditor of the Sheriff's Court."—(*Mr. Arthur O'Connor.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. F. S. POWELL (Wigan): It seems to me that these words would be better inserted later on.

MR. MATTHEWS: Subject to the Lord Advocate's opinion, I think these words would be better inserted in a subsequent clause. This Amendment applies to the Masters of the Superior Courts, but by Section 76, Sub-section 7, the hon. Member will find it provided that certain persons shall perform the duty of a Master of one of the Superior Courts.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: If all these references were necessary to a Court—as in Scotland every Court has its Taxing Master or Auditor—the difficulty would be removed, but, as a matter of fact, the reference may be not to a Court, but to some other person or persons to be appointed by the Secretary of State, and, under these circumstances, it is necessary you should have a reference to some Auditor.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): I think that the difficulty can be met by a readjustment of a subsequent clause.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): The Amendment which stands in my name simply provides for the just treatment of a manager whose conduct has been impugned. It provides that in case the Court exonerates him from all blame, he should not be called upon to pay the costs attending the inquiry. It is not at all a new thing to give costs in a matter of this kind. In the Merchant Shipping Act of 1876, where power is given to the Board of Trade to provisionally detain a ship, costs can be allowed in cases of wrongful detention. Surely it is only fair that when the manager of a mine has been exonerated from blame, he should not be called upon to pay the costs of any inquiry which may have been held into his conduct..

Amendment proposed,

In page 14, line 2, after sub-section (9), add —"(10) If, in the opinion of the Court, the manager or under manager is not unfit to discharge his duties, or has not been grossly negligent or guilty of an offence against this Act, he shall be allowed all reasonable costs and expenses incurred by him in his defence, any question or dispute as to the amount thereof to be ascertained in the manner provided for in the last foregoing sub-section."—(*Mr. Tomlinson.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

MR. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck): May I point out to the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Preston (Mr. Tomlinson) that the effect of this Amendment would be to put a manager in a different position to a workman. The Amendment affords a manager special opportunities and advantages that are not afforded to the workmen, and that creates an impression in the minds of the workmen that there is one law for the rich and another for the poor. I therefore hope the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary will resist this Amendment.

MR. TOMLINSON: This clause only applies to the manager; it does not apply to the workmen at all.

MR. FENWICK: A charge may be made against a workman which he is able to repel; but no facilities are to be afforded to him to do so. Whatever alteration is made in the Bill should be made in favour of the workmen and manager alike.

MR. MATTHEWS: The Amendment is quite inconsistent with Clause 29. Clause 29 leaves the costs of the inquiry at the discretion of the Court. There may be a case in which a man is only acquitted by the skin of his teeth, and therefore it is not necessary to give him costs.

MR. J. B. BALFOUR (Clackmannan, &c.): Allow me to point out that this Amendment would make it imperative to give costs.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Clause *agreed to.*

Clause 29 (Costs and expenses of inquiry).

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): This clause, in one respect, appears to be rather strangely worded. In Sub-section 2—

"The Secretary of State may, if he thinks fit, pay to the person or persons constituting the Court, including any assessors, such remuneration as he may, with the consent of the Treasury, appoint."

But Sub-section 3 says—

"Any costs and expenses ordered by the Court to be paid by a Secretary of State, and any remuneration paid in this section shall be paid out of monies provided by Parliament."

It appears, from one section, that the Secretary of State is to have discretion, and, in the next section, it appears that the Secretary of State is merely to obey the orders of the Court.

Mr. MATTHEWS: The hon. Member will see that Clause 29 is divided into three sections. According to the 1st section, the Court may make an order as to costs; the 2nd sub-section provides that the Secretary of State may remunerate the persons constituting the Court; and the 3rd sub-section provides that the Court may order the Secretary of State to pay certain monies. If the Secretary of State fails in his application, the Court may order him to pay the costs of the manager, and I trust he always will.

Clause *agreed to.*

Clause 30 (Record of cancellation of certificate; restoration in certain cases).

Mr. ATHERLEY-JONES (Durham, N.W.): On behalf of my hon. Friend the Member for the Bishop Auckland Division of Durham (Mr. Paulton) I beg to move the Amendment which stands in his name.

Amendment proposed, in page 14, line 18, leave out Sub-section (2).—(*Mr. Atherley Jones.*)

Question proposed, "That Sub-section (2) stand part of the Clause."

Mr. MATTHEWS: I think it is very cruel.

Mr. ATHERLEY-JONES: I take that view myself, and therefore I think I may, on behalf of my hon. Friend, ask leave to withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Clause *agreed to.*

Clause 31 (Copy of certificate in case of loss); Clause 32 (Expenses in relation to certificates, and application of fees); and Clause 33 (Penalty for forgery of, or false declaration as to certificate), severally *agreed to.*

Returns, Plan, Notices, and Abandonment.

Clause 34 (Returns by owner, agent, or manager of mines).

Mr. TOMLINSON (Preston): I beg to move the omission of the words from "and," in line 40, to the end of line 41. The object of this Amendment is to prevent the publication of individual Returns. There is no objection to the aggregate returns being published; but owners think it might be detrimental to them, if individual Returns or any portion of them were published.

Amendment proposed, in page 15, line 40, leave out "and so much of any individual Return as does not relate to the quantity of mineral gotten or wrought."—(*Mr. Tomlinson.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

Mr. MATTHEWS: I think that on investigation my hon. and learned Friend (Mr. Tomlinson) will find that by this clause we have not altered the law as it stands. If he will look at the 38th section of the Act of 1872, he will see that certain Returns are required to be made; but they are properly guarded. In the last paragraph but one of Section 38, it is enacted that individual Returns shall not be published without the consent of the person making them. There are also Returns required to be made according to Section 69 of the existing Act. Section 69 requires an owner to make a Return according to the form given in Schedule 4. That Return is not protected—it may be made public. The section of the present Bill preserves exactly that distinction. It does not authorize the Secretary of State to make public a Return he is not already authorized to make public in Section 69 of the existing Act. I think that is right. My hon. Friend will find that the clause as it stands does not enable the Secretary of State to make anything public which he cannot already make public; it is not intended to alter the existing law at all. But I am quite prepared, on Report, to take care that the clause repeats the existing law, and no more.

Mr. F. S. POWELL (Wigan): I think this is somewhat more stringent than the existing law.

Mr. MATTHEWS: I think not. I intended to make it but a repetition of the existing section.

Sir JOSEPH PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): I do not think the right hon. Gentleman has quite followed the spirit of the Act of 1872. I have a recollection of the discussion upon the Bill of 1872, and it went to the effect that whatever Returns could properly be published should be published, and that the dealings of private individuals should be as much as possible kept in the background.

MR. TOMLINSON: Upon the understanding that the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary will see that this section does not exceed the existing law on the subject, I will ask leave to withdraw my Amendment.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): The difference between the two cases is this—that by the Act of 1872 the Secretary of State is excluded from publishing an individual Return, whereas, in this Bill, he is restricted only in respect to the quantity of mineral gotten or wrought.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): I beg to move to insert after the word "State," in line 3—

> "Or any body of Commissioners incorporated by Act of Parliament for the drainage of mines, and authorised to assess and levy rates in respect of mineral gotten from such mines."

This Amendment refers exclusively to South Staffordshire, as it cannot have any application to any other part of the country. The object of it I can state in one sentence. Some 15 years ago Parliament constituted a Board of Commissioners, partly nominated and partly elected, for the purpose of draining the mines of South Staffordshire, and it empowered that body to levy a rate of 1*d.* per ton for the purpose of paying for the draining of the surface of the mines. That Commission was empowered to receive Returns, and in the usual way to levy this taxation. Now the discrepancies between the Returns to the Government and the Returns to the Commissioners represents a very large deficiency. The Returns made to the Government between 1872 and 1885, show a total output of something like 136,000,000 tons; whereas the amount of the returns to the Mines Commissioners is, I think, something like 47,000,000 tons. Of course, as a considerable portion of the area is not included in the drainage district, that will have to be deducted; but there can be no doubt that taking the figures of last year alone, 50 per cent of the output was not returned to the Commissioners. The Amendment I propose meets with the approval of my hon. Friend the Member for North Worcestershire (Mr. Hingley), who is one of the largest mineowners in South Staffordshire. I will not trouble the Committee with any further details, as I apprehend there will be no opposition to my Amendment.

Amendment proposed,

> In page 16, line 3, after "State," insert "or any body of Commissioners incorporated by Act of Parliament for the drainage of mines, and authorised to assess and levy rates in respect of mineral gotten from such mines."—(*Mr. Henry H. Fowler.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. MATTHEWS: I confess I have very much sympathy with the body of gentlemen of whom the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) speaks; but I think this Amendment is foreign to the Bill. It would certainly put the Department in a very disagreeable position to hand over the Returns it receives to persons who are going to tax the men who have made the Returns. The Committee will observe that there is no penalty upon not giving a Return at all, or upon not making an accurate Return. In my opinion the only result of this Amendment would be to vitiate the whole Returns.

MR. HINGLEY (Worcestershire, N.): As a large colliery owner in South Staffordshire, I do not see what objection can be raised to this proposal. On the contrary, I think my right hon. Friend's provision would be a very useful one, and one which we know from experience to be eminently necessary. If the Returns are not used for any purpose, what good are they—why should they be called for at all? The Act of Parliament gives power to the Secretary of State to call for a Return, and certainly we think we ought to have access to the general Returns made. The Return is based on the quantity of mineral gotten, and, in my opinion, access ought to be had to the figures.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): I trust the Government will not persist in their objection to this Amendment. Parliament has imposed a rate of 1*d.* per ton, and there is no one more interested in the collection of this rate than the Government. Let me tell the Committee that the principle creditors of these Mine Drainage Commissioners are the Government of the day. I am very glad to see the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) in his place, because I desire to make an appeal to him in regard to this matter, as I know his great Treasury instincts. The Treasury are the largest creditors of these Commissioners, and the Commissioners are, at the present moment, unable to pay the Treasury their instalments because they cannot obtain fair Returns. I think I can startle the Committee with reference to this matter. In 1883, the total Government Return for the district was 10,300,000 tons; the total Return to the Commissioners was 3,200,000. In 1884, the Government Return was 9,600,000, and the amount of the Return to the Commissioners 2,500,000 tons; and in 1885 the Government Return was 9,860,000 tons, and that to the Commissioners 2,420,000. Every million tons not returned to the Commissioners means just over £4,000 out of the pockets of the Treasury. Nobody is objecting to this Amendment; but one of the largest coal-masters in South Staffordshire is really advocating it. These drainage operations are of the greatest importance to the district, and no one can object to this Amendment except the men who are making dishonest Returns. I do not think the Government ought to throw their shield over these men.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): I hope the right hon. Gentleman will not press this Amendment on the present occasion. I will undertake with my right hon. Friend to give attention to this subject between this and Report, by which time we shall be in a position to say whether it is desirable to introduce a proposal of this kind. The proposal comes upon us as an entirely new proposal so far as I am personally concerned, and I think also so far as the Secretary of State is concerned.

Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER: This Amendment has been on the Paper for three months, and I had an interview, as a member of a deputation, with the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) three months ago upon the point of lending money to these Drainage Commissioners, and one of the conditions which the right hon. Gentleman made was that there should be some such provision as this inserted in legislation in order to make the security good to the Government. What will be the effect of leaving this question over until Report? This is the 15th of August, and we have not the faintest idea when the Bill will reach the Report stage, if it ever does. Unless the Government have some strong objection to my Amendment, they ought to accept it at once. The Committee is evidently in favour of it; certainly that portion of the Committee which represents masters and men. Those who represent the taxpayers certainly cannot throw any obstacle in the way of the Commissioners discharging the public duty imposed upon them.

Mr. MATTHEWS: The Commissioners have not got the power of surcharging the persons who are liable to pay this rate. If they have not such power, I do not see why the right hon. Gentleman should seek to enlarge the Commissioners' powers through the agency of a Coal Mines Regulation Bill. These Returns have always been regarded as confidential. Of course, if the House calls for their publication, the Government must submit; but, certainly, it will look very like a breach of confidence if we do this.

Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER: The Commissioners have the power of appeal—but it is very cumbersome. This is not a taxing clause; besides, you are putting in a clause which, so far as this Bill is concerned, is new legislation. You say that the Returns should not be shown to anybody; but I ask the Committee to make an exception in the case of the Commissioners who are appointed under Parliamentary authority, and empowered to levy rates in respect of minerals gotten from such mines. Upon the Government's head be the responsibility if they refuse this Amendment. I publicly inform the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury that in resisting this Amendment he is acting against the wishes of the people of South Staffordshire, and, at the same time, subjecting the country to a heavy loss.

Mr. WOOTTON ISAACSON (Tower Hamlets, Stepney): Will the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) say from whom he got the Returns he has quoted?

Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER: From the mineowners themselves. They make one Return to the Government and another to the Commissioners. There is great discrepancy between the two sets of figures. This is a most reasonable Amendment, and I shall certainly press it to a Division.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 35 (Plan of mine to kept at office).

Mr. ATHERLEY-JONES (Durham, N.W.): I beg to move to leave out the word "six," in line 11, and insert "three." The object of this Amendment is perfectly obvious. The practice is for the mineowner to have certain sets of plans made out from day to day in pencil. After a certain length of time, he makes them out in ink, and then returns them under the Act of 1872. Under the present Act, he is to have at his office plans for the inspection of the Inspector when he comes down to visit the mine. It seems desirable that there should be afforded full facilities to the Inspector and others for knowing what the state of the workings of the mine is for a somewhat more recent date than six months. Everyone knows the rapid progress which is made in mines—what a great transformation may take place in the workings of a mine in a comparatively short period. I suggest to the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary that he should accept with much willingness this Amendment.

Amendment proposed, in page 16, line 11, leave out the word "six," and insert the word "three."—(*Mr. Atherley-Jones.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'six' stand part of the Clause."

Mr MATTHEWS: It is difficult to deal with an Amendment of this sort, as there is no principle involved. The law has been that what the hon. Gentleman contemplates should be done every six months. I have made inquiries upon the point, and I have been told that to oblige a mineowner to have his plans brought up to three months would be extremely inconvenient to him. This, however, is a practical question, and I should be extremely glad to hear the opinion of practical men upon it.

Mr. BARNES (Derbyshire, Chesterfield): As a mineowner, I hope the Amendment will not be accepted. If my hon. and learned Friend (Mr. Atherley-Jones) had ever made a survey of a mine, he would know that it takes a very considerable time indeed.

Sir JOSEPH PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): I fully appreciate the object of my hon. and learned Friend in seeking to provide that when an Inspector asks for a plan, that plan should be as accurate as possible. The whole question really depends upon the word "accurate." There are practical difficulties in the way of the Amendment, and therefore I hope my hon. and learned Friend will allow the clause to stand as at present.

Mr. BURT (Morpeth): I am sorry that my hon. Friend the Member for the Barnard Castle Division of Durham (Sir Joseph Pease), who, I know, as a mineowner, holds very liberal views, is opposed to this Amendment. In my opinion it can be accepted without any practical inconvenience, and I shall vote with my hon. and learned Friend (Mr. Atherley-Jones) if he goes to a Division.

Colonel BLUNDELL (Lancashire, S.W., Ince.): I cannot help thinking that it would be very undesirable to hurry a survey. The important thing is to keep the "working plan" close up to date at all important points.

Mr. MATTHEWS: May I draw the attention of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Morpeth, (Mr. Burt) to the fact that the owner or manager must, at any time, show "the depth of the shaft with a section of the same," and shall at any time mark on the plan and section "the then state of the workings of the mine."

Mr. TOMLINSON (Preston): There is this other point to be considered, that six months is the time at which the rents are paid, and it is hardly a long period. There would be considerable inconvenience and expense without real benefit if plans were to be prepared as frequently as the hon. Gentleman proposes.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): The hon. and learned Member (Mr. Tomlinson) might just as well have said that a year was the period within which reports are made. I should have thought the Government would have been perfectly ready to have consented to the introduction of the word "two" instead of "six." That would have been in accordance with Section 37, which provides that notice shall be given within two months of every kind of new working. If two months is the proper period for that, surely three months is a reasonable period within which plans shall be made up. It is of great importance, when you come to investigate the circumstances of an accident, to know exactly in what state the plans really were—to know whether they were complete and available for immediate use under whatever circumstances might intervene. Six months is altogether too long a period.

Mr. ABRAHAM (Glamorgan, Rhondda): I hope my hon. and learned Friend (Mr. Atherley-Jones) will press this Amendment to a Division. It is not a question of the Inspector only calling for the plans, but it is a question for the mineowner himself; and I am here to submit that, so far as my experience goes, mineowners in South Wales have surveys taken once a month, and I hold they are quite right in that. I assert that if a correct position of the workings had been shown upon the plans at the end of every three months, instead of six months, the inundation which took place in the Rhondda Valley would not have taken place, and many valuable lives would not have been lost. It is of the greatest importance that the mineowner should know the condition of his workings, especially if he is approaching old workings, where water is. I hope the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary, and the hon. Gentlemen opposite will see the reasonableness of this Amendment, and will accept it. If they do not, I trust my hon. and learned Friend will ascertain the opinion of the Committee by means of a Division.

Mr. TOMLINSON: The view we take of this Amendment is that it is quite unnecessary, so far as safety goes. I was surprised to hear the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Abraham) say that it is a matter of the greatest importance that this Amendment should be adopted. My own opinion is that on the whole the work of a mine is more easily carried on if there are not too many of these arbitrary requirements. Six months is a very reasonable limit. At the same time, if any great reason could be shown, which I think has not been shown, I should not persist in the retention of the period of six months.

Sir JOSEPH PEASE: Allow me to point out to hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway that Sub-section 2 provides that—

> "The owner, agent, or manager of the mine shall, on request at any time of an Inspector under this Act, produce to him at the office at the mine, such plan and section, and shall also, on the like request, mark on such plan and section the then state of the workings of the mine."

If any difficulty arises, the Inspector, under this sub-section, can order the plan to be made up to the then state of the mine.

Mr. ABRAHAM: I have given the Committee a case in point. Had the plans of the mine been made up to a reasonable date the inundation which occurred in the Rhondda Valley would never have happened. There is no going back from that fact, and I hope the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary will accede to this Amendment.

Mr. J. W. SIDEBOTHAM (Cheshire, Hyde): The taking of these plans very often cause considerable inconvenience. In many cases, the working of the pit is almost stopped for half-a-day, in which case the colliers lose half-a-day's pay. As was pointed out by the hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. Atherley-Jones), managers constantly mark in pencil on their plans the points at which the workings have arrived. That is quite sufficient for ordinary purposes, and therefore I hope the Committee will not assent to this Amendment.

Mr. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.W.): The observations which have fallen from the hon. and learned Member for Preston (Mr. Tomlinson) and the hon. Member for the Hyde Division of Cheshire (Mr. J. W. Sidebotham) show the remarkable high moral ground on which hon. Members opposite are disposed to treat these questions involving human life and human suffering. All I hope is, that if this Amendment is not conceded to us, the public outside will fully appreciate the motives which actuate hon. Members opposite.

Mr. F. S. POWELL (Wigan): Allow me to repudiate in the most respectful language and spirit—but nevertheless strongly—the imputation cast upon the owners of mines. I have the honour of the acquaintance of many owners of mines, and I can bear testimony to the extreme anxiety which they have to conduct their mining operations in such a manner as may save life. Some reference was made a short time ago to the individual interests of the owners, and I cannot forget I have the honour of occupying the seat in this House which was formerly occupied by my lamented Friend (Mr. Thomas Knowles), who once stated in the House of Commons that one accident cost him £100,000. That statement made a great impression upon the House. I venture to refer to that statement of my lamented Friend, in order that it may tend to prevent a repetition of these imputations which lend bitterness to the discussion, while in no way aiding the solution of the difficulties with which we have to contend.

MR. HANDEL COSSHAM (Bristol, E.): Speaking with the experience of 40 years, I think that, for the general purposes of the colliery, a six months' limit is quite safe. When works are approaching water, however, I think that three months' limit is very much too long. In such cases, plans ought certainly to be made up every two or three weeks. What I would suggest is, that in all cases of dangerous workings —when water, for instance, is being approached—an Inspector should have power to order the plans to be made up oftener. [An hon. MEMBER: He has such power.]

SIR HUSSEY VIVIAN (Swansea): I think that this Amendment might very well be accepted. Personally, I should be very glad to have a little pressure brought to bear upon surveyors to keep the plans up properly. I see no difficulty in the acceptance of this Amendment. Procrastination is one of the worst possible vices, and, so far as I know, there is no plan of the collieries with which I am connected which is as far behind as three months. I always insist upon the date of the survey being marked upon the plan, and I am always able, by that means, to see the last time that the survey was made. If any lengthened interval exists, I express a strong opinion with regard to the matter. I cannot possibly see why any survey should be three months behind. This Amendment is a very fair one, and might without any danger or difficulty be accepted.

SIR JOSEPH PEASE: As a matter of fact, we are not dealing with the survey. If we were, I should certainly say that the survey ought to be made much oftener than six months.

MR. HINGLEY (Worcestershire, N.): I think the case would be properly met, if, in Sub-section 2, the words "and the like request" were omitted, so that the section should read "and shall mark on such plan and section the then state of the workings of the mine." What I require from the men in my employ is that the plan should be kept up every week—that the condition of every working should be marked every week.

MR. ABRAHAM: I have not the least desire to insinuate that the owners are disregardful of their own interests in this matter; but I think that enough has been said on both sides of the House to prove that it is an easy matter to keep the plans frequently and accurately made up. Standing here as the Representative of the Rhondda Valley, where a number of lives were lost on account of accurate plans not being made up, I should not be doing my duty unless I divided the House upon this Amendment. I trust that hon. Members opposite will not throw upon themselves the onus of dividing upon such an important point as that which this Amendment raises.

MR. WOOD (Durham, Houghton-le-Spring): This Amendment is reasonable, and, in fact, is already generally adopted by colliery owners at the present time. I trust that the Government will accept it, and we may proceed with further Business.

MR. TOMLINSON: I have no wish to persist in my opposition to this Amendment, if there is any object to be gained by its acceptance.

MR. MATTHEWS: On behalf of the Government, I have not the slightest desire to resist this Amendment. Personally, I have always thought that a correct survey ought to be taken very frequently. I never could see that any colliery owner would omit to have the state of his workings ascertained often. I assent to the substitution of the word "three" for "six."

Question put, and *negatived.*

Question, "That the word 'three' be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I desire to draw the attention of the Committee to the last words of Sub-section 2—namely, "and the Inspector shall be entitled to examine the plan and section, but not to make a copy of any part thereof respectively." Now what I wish to submit is that it may be very important that an Inspector should ake a copy of the plan and section sometimes, especially if he should think that the plan is incomplete, faulty, or misleading. The possibility of its so being is contemplated in the very next section of the clause, which is in these words—

> "If the owner, agent, or manager of any mine fails to keep, or wilfully refuses to produce or allow to be examined, the plan and section aforesaid, or wilfully withholds any portion thereof, or wilfully refuses, on request, to mark thereon that state of the workings of the mine, or conceals any part of these workings, or produces an imperfect or inaccurate plan or section, he shall (unless he shows that he was ignorant of the concealment, imperfection, or inaccuracy) be guilty of an offence against this Act."

It will therefore be seen that this very clause contemplates the possibility of the plans produced being imperfect, misleading, and therefore dangerous. Under such circumstances, it may be of great importance that the Inspector should be in a position, if he thinks fit, to take a copy of the plan or any part of it. I therefore propose to leave out from "but," in line 20, to the end of the subsection.

Amendment proposed, in page 16, line 20, to leave out "but not to make a copy of any part there of respectively." —(*Mr. Arthur O'Connor.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

Mr. TOMLINSON (Preston): I must protest once for all against the sort of assumption which the hon. Gentleman makes, that the colliery proprietors have any desire or interest in not carrying on their collieries with due regard to safety. I am not quite sure what the reasons were for putting in the words which the hon. Gentleman proposes to leave out; but off-hand, without having an opportunity of considering the matter carefully, I certainly cannot consent to the words being struck out.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): Let me say that I do not desire to cast any reflection upon mineowners with regard to this question. I merely take the clause as it stands, and in Subsection 3 it is seen that the Government themselves, both in this Bill and in the Act of 1872, recognized the possibility of these plans being imperfect, incomplete, misleading, and dangerous. When an accident occurs, it may be of great consequence that the Inspector should be able to produce the plans, and say—"This or that is what the owner showed to me as representing the real condition of the working of the pit on the occasion of my last visit." It may be possible to prove that the plan was not in accordance with the facts of the case—that the accident resulted from the stopping up of an air course from imperfect ventilation. Therefore, I say, it is of great importance that an Inspector should be allowed at his discretion to take a copy of any plan or portion of a plan. I shall certainly press my Amendment to a division.

Sir JOSEPH PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): For my part, I do not think any objection can be raised to an Inspector taking a copy of the whole plan.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): There have been several cases before the Courts of Law, in which persons sueing neighbouring owners for wrongfully taking coal have charged the defendant with keeping false plans of workings.

Mr. MATTHEWS: I am perfectly indifferent in this matter. I know, however, that when the Act of 1872 was passed, great jealousy existed as to an Inspector taking a copy of any mining plan. I would rather take no part in the discussion; but it does seem to me that the hon. Gentleman would have been dealing much more fairly with those who are interested in this matter if he had given Notice of his Amendment.

Mr. HINGLEY (Worcestershire, N.): If any copy of the plan is allowed to be taken, it should be understood that it is for the Inspector's own use, and not for publication.

Mr. WARMINGTON (Monmouth, W.): If we were to strike out the words "but not to make a copy of any part thereof respectively," we should leave the Inspector without any power at all, and I do not think that under the law he would be entitled, without special power, to make a copy of a plan.

Mr. HANDEL COSSHAM (Bristol, E.): I have never known of the refusal on the part of the proprietor of a mine to allow an Inspector to take a copy of the plan. Personally, I have frequently furnished Inspectors with copies of plans. What, however, ought to be guarded against is the danger of these copies of plans being used for the purposes of assisting landowners in any contest they may have with proprietors. If an Inspector had power to step in and furnish plans to litigants, great mischief would result from this Amendment.

Mr. A. WILLIAMS (Glamorgan, S.): I think the views of hon. Gentlemen would be attained if it were provided that an Inspector should be allowed to take a copy of a plan "for official purposes only."

Mr. S. MASON (Lanark, Mid): I think that the suggestion of my hon. Friend the Member for North Worcestershire (Mr. Hingley) would meet all difficulty—namely, that the Inspector should be allowed to make a copy of the plan, or any part thereof, except for his own use.

Mr. TOMLINSON: It might meet the hon. Gentleman's (Mr. Hingley's) own case; but we ought to be allowed the opportunity of considering whether we have any objection either to the words as they stand, or as they are proposed to be amended. It would only be fair and proper that this discussion should be postponed.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): If there were the least difficulty in the matter, I should have no hesitation in complying with the desire of the hon. and learned Member for Preston (Mr. Tomlinson); but even the hon. and learned Member cannot pretend he is not able with this short notice to understand the drift and the meaning and the reach of the Amendment. I believe that this is a very important question. I believe that the plans ought to be checked, or to be susceptible of being checked, as occasion arises, and it is because it may possibly involve the safety of a large number of men that I raise this question. If I withdraw this Amendment, will it be competent for any hon. Member to move to add the words after the word "section?" [*Cries of* "No!"] Then I adhere to my Motion to leave out the words.

Question put, and *negatived.*

Mr. WARMINGTON: I beg to move, in line 20, to insert, after the word "section," the words "and for official purposes to make a copy of any part thereof."

Amendment proposed, in page 16, line 20, after "section," insert "and for official purposes to make a copy of any part thereof."—(*Mr. Warmington.*)

Question, "That those words be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 36 (Notice to be given of accidents in mines).

Mr. TOMLINSON (Preston): I do not move the first of my Amendments—namely, on page 17, line 19, after "Inspector," to insert "within twenty-four hours after such explosion or accident." I, however, move my second Amendment—namely, in the same place, to insert "within twenty-four hours after the receipt of such notice as aforesaid of such explosion or accident." I think it is only fair that this interval of 24 hours should be allowed for the attendance of the Inspector. I do not think it would be in the least inconvenient that this regulation should be laid down, and therefore I beg to move this Amendment.

Amendment proposed,

In page 17, line 19, after the word "Inspector," to insert the words "within twenty-four hours after the receipt of such notice as aforesaid of such explosion or accident."—*Mr. Tomlinson.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): The effect of these words might very possibly be to afford just that amount of time which is so useful in cases of certain accidents to enable those interested in concealing the cause of the disaster, to remove every trace and indication of such cause. Of course, I am putting myself in the way of having it said——

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): According to the section, the place where the explosion or accident occurs is to be left as it was immediately after the explosion or accident.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: Yes, but the Amendment says "within twenty-four hours after the Inspector has read the notice." It might happen that the Inspector could not get to the colliery or scene of the accident within 24 hours. Over and over again accidents have occurred in collieries, and everything has been put straight and cleared up before the Inspector arrived, there being no trace left of the real cause of the accident. Things may be removed which would not look well in the eyes of the Inspector, or things may be supplied which before were wanting. You may have something that will explain an explosion by reason of the accumulation of gas above an archway, which, if you only allow those who are responsible for the bad condition of the mine to have time to put it straight, they would have filled up so as to make the faulty place incapable of admitting the presence of explosive gas. There are a hundred things that may be done to prevent the Inspector, when he does come, from ascertaining where the responsibility lies, and where blame ought to be attached. The right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary seems to think that this Amendment works in the direction of safety. To my mind it does the very reverse. Although at first, perhaps, it may appear to be in the interests of safety, I think that, when it is examined, it will be found to have a precisely opposite effect.

Mr. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck): The next Amendment on the Paper, which appears in the name of the hon. and learned Member for Preston (Mr. Tomlinson), seems to me to be preferable to this one.

Mr. TOMLINSON: I am moving the second Amendment.

Mr. FENWICK: I beg pardon, I was not aware of the fact. This Amendment then, it seems to me, is exactly similar to the one standing in the name of the hon. Member for Morpeth (Mr. Burt), and which, as I understand it, has been practically agreed to by the coal miners and several Members representing mining constituencies. If the Committee force the Amendment to a Division, under the circumstances, I should feel myself bound to support it.

Mr. HANDEL COSSHAM (Bristol, E.): I would suggest that, if the view of the hon. Member for East Donegal (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) is carried out, in the case of a serious accident hundreds of lives might be sacrificed which, under existing arrangements, are now saved. Men might be entombed for hours if you have to find the place in the condition in which it may happen to be after an accident during whatever period may elapse between the occurrence of the accident and the arrival of the Inspector. Hundreds of lives might be lost. The first thing to be done in the case of an explosion is to restore the ventilation, and the adoption of the hon. Member's view would render it illegal to take means for the purpose of effecting that object until, probably, a considerable time had elapsed.

Question, "That those words be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I beg to move in page 17, line 21, to leave out the words "or would impede the working of the mine." I did not insist upon my objection to the last Amendment when it was put from the Chair. I allowed it to go without challenge, because of the observations made by the hon. Gentleman the Member for East Bristol (Mr. Handel Cossham) to the effect that, if I had pressed my objection, it might have involved the loss of many lives. Of course, it is reasonable to suppose that if that would have been the result of my proposal, hon. Members would have been reluctant to support it. This, however, is an Amendment which contemplates a different thing—namely, the profit of those on whose property the accident occurs. It does appear to me that, if an accident has occurred involving the loss of human lives, it is not much to ask that, at any rate, the working of the mine shall be stopped until a complete investigation shall have been made by the responsible authorities.

Amendment proposed, in page 17, line 21, leave out the words "or would impede the working of the mine."—(*Mr. Arthur O'Connor.*)

Question proposed "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

Mr. TOMLINSON: I do not think it would be desirable to omit these words. The hon. Member talks about the profit of the owners; but there are some hon. Members who sit beside the hon. Gentleman who know perfectly well that the working of a mine, which does not always mean profit to the owner, but which may even mean the reverse of profit to him, at the same time always means wages to the miners. Therefore, except in case of grave necessity, I do not think anyone should desire to stop the working of a mine. Accidents in mines are of all kinds. Supposing there should be one in a small part of the roof. There may be no particular advantage in leaving the mine as it was immediately after the accident until the arrival of the Inspector, and it may have the effect of stopping the ventilation. I contend that, under those circumstances, it would be desirable that the authorities in the mine should have power to set about remedying the defect at once. I do not suppose, ordinarily speaking, that the question of making profit would operate at all in the minds of the colliery owners where there was a question of the safety of human life, and I do not suppose that in many cases the reasons I have urged for retaining these words would operate, but occasions may arise when it would be extremely inconvenient to allow the mine to continue in the state in which it was immediately after an accident.

MR. BURT (Morpeth): In ordinary cases I quite agree with my hon. Friend who has moved the Amendment that a working place should not be interfered with at all after an accident has occurred. I think it would rarely happen that it would be desirable to interfere with it, but if an accident happens in a main roadway which affects the working of the mine and the consequent employment of the whole of the men, it surely would appear desirable that the defect should be rectified without delay. I certainly could not support the elimination of these words, because I think it would lead to great hardship to the miners, and injury to the working of the mines.

MR. MATTHEWS: This clause requires some looking at. Let me point out why it is that the hon. Member for East Donegal (Mr. Arthur Connor), who seems to take to himself the sole credit for the desire to protect colliers from injury, should not object to the retention of these words. The section affects all accidents which involve the loss of life. Well, let us suppose that something falls down the shaft, or falls from the roof, and kills a man, the hon. Member wishes that the man who has met with the accident, and the cause of the accident, whatever it may be, should remain undisturbed, pending the arrival of the Inspector. Well, that might necessitate leaving an obstruction at the bottom of the shaft, or in the workings of the mine—an obstruction which might probably throw no light whatever on the question as to who was responsible for the accident. Such an obstruction might even prevent the cage being sent down into the pit. Let us suppose another case. Suppose a man gets in the way of a tram, and is run over and killed; is the body to remain on the spot where the accident occurred, it may be at the mouth of the pit, until the Inspector arrives, or during a period of 24 hours? Is the working of the mine to be impeded for that period—is the working of the tramway to be entirely stopped? I cannot understand that such a thing as that would be at all convenient. Of course, if there is nothing in the condition of the mine to render such a course inconvenient, and if it were nesessary to leave things untouched in order to give some idea of the causes which led to the accident, nothing would be touched. It would be desirable to leave everything as much as possible in the position in which it was; but what I have stated I think shows the difficulty of laying down a regulation of a general character, such as that the hon. Member proposes.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: There is one aspect of this question which does not appear to have occurred to the hon. and learned Member for Preston (Mr. Tomlinson), and that is that a great deal of the difficulty which exists as to the inspection of places that are the scenes of accidents arises from the paucity of Inspectors. You have a very small staff of Inspectors—you ought to have a great many more of these gentlemen. My hope was that if the working of the mine was to be impeded until the Inspector's visit was secured, then the owners of the mines themselves would be as interested as the miners in having an efficient and sufficient staff of Inspectors. The possibility of delay I considered would probably lead the owners to support the application of the men that there should be a sufficient staff of Inspectors. If you had a sufficient staff you would have no difficulty in getting the scene of the accident inspected. You ought to have an Inspector on the scene of an accident within 12 hours of the occurrence of the accident. His whereabouts should be known—it should be possible to communicate with him by telegraph. You should be able to communicate with the Inspector, if not the Chief Inspector of the district at any rate an Assistant Inspector. The loss to the owner, or those interested in the matter, consequent upon adopting such an arrangement as I propose would be very trifling.

Mr. HANDEL COSSHAM: The object of all mine Inspectors should be this—to secure the maximum safety with the minimum of interference with the working of the mine. I see inconveniences of this sort in the adoption of the hon. Member's proposal—that is to say, a man may be killed at a remote part of the mine; well, as this section will apply wherever there is loss of life the adoption of this Amendment, in the event of a man being so killed, might render it necessary to stop the whole working of the mine, if things had to be left in the condition in which they were at the time of the accident. If you did this you might stop the whole mining operations of the country. No doubt you should allow the Inspector to see all that has been done, but in the case of an accident where the cause is palpable I cannot believe that it would always be necessary to leave things as they were until his arrival. To stop the whole working of a mine because a man has been killed in some remote part of it, would be to adopt a system which would work very badly.

Question, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause," put, and *agreed to.*

Mr. BURT: I beg to move to leave out from this sub-section the words "or unless an Inspector informs the owner, agent, or manager, that he considers a visit unnecessary." I would point out in recommending this Amendment to the right hon. Gentleman opposite——

Mr. MATTHEWS: Agreed, agreed.

Amendment proposed, in page 17, line 21, after "mine" leave out to the end of sub-section.—(*Mr. Burt.*)

Question, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause," put, and *negatived.*

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I have upon the Paper an Amendment which would come in after the word "unnecessary"—namely, to insert the words, "and the Inspector shall at once visit the place of such explosion or accident." The Committee will see that this Amendment is in accord with what I was saying just now as to my object in endeavouring to enlist the interest of the mineowner in the efficiency and sufficiency of the staff of Inspectors. At present, the Inspector very often cannot visit the place where an accident has happened, just as he is unable at certain periods to inspect the mines under his care. Take the case of one Inspector in the East of Scotland Division who has 400 or 500 mines in his district. Allowing that he works every day, even on Sundays, he would not be able to inspect all the mines of his district in a year. He has an enormous amount of work to do, for besides the work of inspection he has reports to make and inquiries to hold. Well, now if this Amendment is inserted, it will ensure the strengthening of the staff of Inspectors, and that is one of the objects which I think is shared by myself and a very large number of the Committee even on the Government side of the House.

Amendment proposed, in page 17, line 21, to leave out from "or," to end of sub-section, and insert "and the Inspector shall at once visit the place of such explosion or accident."—(*Mr. Arthur O'Connor.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. TOMLINSON: Of course, I have no objection to the Inspector coming to the scene of the accident as soon as possible after an accident has occurred. The sooner the better. So far as my experience goes, Inspectors do make it a point to attend upon the scene of an accident with all reasonable speed—even where the accident is a trivial one. The hon. Member opposite does not seem to understand how the Inspectors do their work. I happened to be talking to a mine engineer at a colliery some time ago. There had been a trivial accident—a man through his own fault had injured himself in some way or other, and the Inspector hearing of it what did he do? Why he went to the colliery, he looked round about it, and, having made an inspection he went for the purposes of inspection to a neighbouring mine. The Inspectors work in this way—a man who knows his duty and is anxious to do it well, will make his visits fit in this way. He will make his visit to the scene of an accident fit in with his inspection of other mines. By this Amendment you would interfere with the discharge of very onerous duties on the part of the Inspectors. As I say, I have no objection to Inspectors coming as soon as possible, but I would not insist upon an Inspector at once visiting the scene of a trivial accident.

MR. MATTHEWS: I must object to this Amendment, as I believe it would in all probability throw upon Inspectors most unnecessary work. With regard to necessary inspection, so far as I know, when anything has happened which seems to indicate that all is not right, and that blame is to be attached somewhere or other, the Inspector does not delay in visiting the mine. They are promptly on the scene of the accidents, but the hon. Member wishes to oblige an Inspector to at once visit the scene of an accident whether or not any mismanagement has taken place. Of course, there are many instances in which accidents occur that are pure accidents, and for which obviously no one can be held to blame Take the case I mentioned just now, a man gets in front of a tram or tumbles over a pick which may be in his way and breaks his leg. If the Inspector gets notice of this, he would have, according to the hon. Member's proposal to visit the scene of the accident at once. Under this Amendment you would compel him to go into a mine, however far away he may be at the time of the accident. Such a proposal appears to me altogether absurd.

MR. W. ABRAHAM (Glamorgan, Rhondda): It is difficult to understand this clause unless some such principle as that proposed by the hon. Member for East Donegal (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) is adopted. The mineowners can make no objection to this Amendment. With regard to the Inspectors, I know that they are doing their duty to the best of their ability, but at the present moment this matter of visiting the scenes of accidents is left to their discretion. All we ask is, that we should insist upon the work they are expected to do being done. The Amendment would cause no inconvenience to anybody, and I trust that it will be accepted.

MR. PICKARD (York, W.R., Normanton): The sub-section, in one part of it, reads "until visited by an inspector." Therefore, I take it that if an accident occurs, those who are working in the mine are entitled to have the scene of the accident inspected. Those who are in charge also have a right to have an Inspector—they must be justified by somebody or other; therefore, I think the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary would do well to accept the Amendment. It could not do harm, and might do a great deal of good. I am sure that Inspectors will at once visit the spot in cases where a serious accident occurs.

COLONEL BLUNDELL (Lancashire, S.W., Ince): This section says that where loss of life or serious personal injury has immediately resulted from an explosion or accident, certain things shall be done. Well, it is evident that, under such circumstances, an Inspector would lose no time in visiting the scene of the accident. But discretion must be left to him to discriminate between serious and trivial accidents. It would be absurd to require an Inspector who has a great deal of work to do to rush off to examine into an occurrence which is indisputably a pure accident, where obviously no one is to blame, when possibly he may have important work to attend to at a distant part of his district.

MR. A. J. WILLIAMS (Glamorgan, S.): The section deals with cases in which there has been loss of life or serious personal injury resulting from an accident. That refers to serious personal injury of any kind whatever, and obviously will cover cases in which inspection would be entirely unnecessary. I must say there is a great deal of force in what the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary has said on this subject. Under the 1st sub-section, the owner, agent, or manager of a mine is required within 24 hours after an explosion or accident to send notice of it and of the loss of life or personal injury occasioned thereby, to the Inspector of the district. He is reqired to state in writing how the accident came about; and it appears to me that there are many cases in which it would be perfectly idle to bring down an Inspector, who might be engaged upon most important duties some distance away, to inspect an accident of an ordinary kind —for instance, where a miner has been trampled upon, or run over by a tram, and killed, or seriously injured. Some discretion ought to be left to him, seeing that under the section he will receive full particulars of the way in which the accident was brought about. There cannot be the least doubt in the world that an Inspector who believes that a serious accident has taken place will not delay proceeding to the scene of it in order to find out for himself what has happened. The Inspector, under this section, is to receive notice from the owner, agent, or manager of a mine of loss of life or any personal injury whatever to any person employed in or about the mine, by reason of any accident. Well, accidents will vary very much in degree and significance. Some may be merely common casualties, such as might occur in any employment; and in respect to these it will be for the Inspector, in the exercise of his discretion, to determine whether any further inquiry is necessary. On the other hand, where there has been loss of life on a large scale, and all the circumstances are of an unusual nature, the Inspector will not only make an inquiry, but will put himself into communication with the Secretary of State. Does the Committee intend to insist upon an Inspector visiting the scenes of accidents which are to be described merely as common casualties, such as might happen in any employment?

Question put, and *negatived.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 37 (Notice to be given of opening and abandonment of mine).

Mr. TOMLINSON (Preston): I wish to submit to the Committee that it is desirable, in line 33, to leave out the words "or a seam." I do not think it necessary that notice should be given to an Inspector when a new seam is opened or abandoned. I quite grant that when a new shaft is opened or a new colliery is commenced, notice should be given to the Inspector; but it does seem to me unnecessary that where even for a matter of temporary convenience, a new seam may be abandoned—a matter which is of every day occurrence—the management of the business should be taken out of the hands of the colliery manager to the extent of his being required to give notice to the Inspector. It may be a very common event in the ordinary management of the mine. I beg to move to omit the words "or a seam."

Amendment proposed, in page 17, line 33, to leave out the words "or a seam." —(*Mr. Tomlinson.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): I think it will be necessary for the Committee to retain these words here, and in the subsequent lines—for the hon. and learned Member proposes to leave them out of several parts of the Bill. I think that where a new seam is opened, the new opening should be communicated to the Inspector.

Mr. TOMLINSON: I will not press the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Mr. TOMLINSON: I do not think it necessary that notice should be given where the working of a shaft or seam is recommenced after any abandonment or discontinuance for a period of two months. I think the period should be extended to six months, as a seam may be idle for more than two months under the ordinary regulations of the colliery. There may be no market in the summer, and it may be unnecessary to work the seam.

Amendment proposed, in page 17, line 35, after "discontinued," to insert the words "for a period of six months." —(*Mr. Tomlinson.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman if he will accept the period of two months instead of six months? I think that the period of two months is a very proper period, indeed we find it in this clause in Sub-section 3.

Mr. A. J. WILLIAMS (Glamorgan, S.): I also hope that the right hon. Gentleman will abide by the terms contained in Sub-section 3. In the district I am acquainted with, this period is a matter of the greatest importance. There are a number of seams in the mines there of a most dangerous character, and if they are opened after having been abandoned for some time, to my mind it is highly essential that the Inspector should be informed of it.

MR. TOMLINSON: I do not wish to press this Amendment. I only thought it desirable to submit it to the Committee—I did not think it desirable to hamper the Bill with too many restrictions of a narrow kind.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is it your pleasure that the Amendment be withdrawn?

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): Before the Amendment is withdrawn, I wish to say that the significance of this matter is not in the proposal made by the hon. and learned Member, but in the fact that immediately he made it the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary, who evidently did not see the consequences of the alteration turned round and said—"Agreed, I accept it."

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Clause *agreed to.*

Clause 38 (Fencing in case of abandoned mines).

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): I beg to move the Amendment standing on the Paper in the name of the hon. Member for Hanley (Mr. Woodall)—namely, in line 23 after "be," to insert "liable to any damages for, or be." The Amendment is merely a clerical one, and there is one following it in my own name, which is of the same character.

Amendment proposed, in page 18, line 23, after the word "be," to insert the words "liable to any damages for, or be."—(*Mr. Tomlinson.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I am afraid that those words will not do. I do not think it would be right to say that no person shall be liable to any damages for doing such acts as may be considered necessary to comply with the section; but I think we might safely say that no person shall be precluded by any agreement for doing, or be liable under any contract to any penalty or forfeiture for doing, such acts as may be necessary in order to comply with the provisions of the section. I see no objection to that.

MR. TOMLINSON: Then I will put my own Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Amendment proposed, in page 18, line 24, after the second "any," insert "damages."—(*Mr. Tomlinson.*)

Question, "That the word 'damages' be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 39 (Plan of abandoned mine or seam to be sent to Secretary of State) *agreed to.*

Inspection.

Clause 40 (Appointment of Inspectors of mines).

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): Before the hon. and learned Member for Preston (Mr. Tomlinson) moves the Amendment standing in his name, I beg to move an Amendment on the first line. The section says—

> "The Secretary of State may from time to time appoint any fit persons to be Inspectors (under whatever title he may from time to time fix) of mines, and assign them their duties, and may award them such salaries as the Treasury may approve, and may remove any such Inspector."

Well, this wording leaves the matter to that initiative, and to the discretion of the Secretary of State, which means, of course, the Home Secretary. Well, Sir—and I say it with all possible respect—I must decline in this matter to trust to the discretion or energy of the Home Secretary. In reply to a Question with regard to the staff of Inspectors of Coal Mines, the right hon. Gentleman the present Home Secretary, many months ago, stated that in his opinion the staff was overworked, and was inadequate for the numerous and onerous duties which it had to discharge. Well, that state of things has gone on from that day to this, the right hon. Gentleman remaining Secretary of State. The right hon. Gentleman has been in such a position as enabled him to bring pressure to bear, if such were necessary, upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and upon the Head of Her Majesty's Government, in order to obtain the necessary funds to obtain a sufficient staff of Inspectors. But the right hon. Gentleman has not done so, and I believe that however long he remains in Office he will not do so. I have seen nothing in the course of the right hon. Gentleman's administration to lead me to suppose that he will do as Home Secretary anything which he can possibly avoid doing. This Bill itself is an indication of the same sort of thing. What is the Bill? It is hardly anything more than a servile transcript of the Bill which he found in the pigeon holes of the Home Office left there by his Predecessor. That Bill was the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman who sits on the Front Bench below me—I do not mean to say who is sitting there now, but who usually occupies the seat upon that Bench. It was the Bill of a late Member of the Government. I have checked the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary with the Bill to which I refer, from beginning to end, and I find that it is almost word for word a reproduction of the Bill of the late Government——

Mr. TOMLINSON: I wish, Sir, as a matter of Order, to ask you whether it is competent for the hon. Member, upon an Amendment of which he has not told us the nature, to discuss the conduct of the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary, and also the whole policy of this Bill?

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot say, for I do not yet know what the Amendment is.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: The Amendment will come in after the words "a Secretary of State." I propose to leave out the word "may," in order to insert the word "shall," and I propose afterwards to insert "from time to time appoint a sufficient number of fit persons to be Inspectors." I say that there is nothing in the action of the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary which should lead us to suppose that he is at all likely, on his own initiative, or that he is likely, under any circumstances, unless immense pressure is brought to bear upon him, to take the trouble to appoint a sufficient staff of Inspectors. Where he has altered the Bill of his Predecessor, as he found it in the pigeon holes of the Home Office, has only been in such places as have been made the subject of pressure from one quarter or another. The right hon. Gentleman is perfectly prepared to receive deputations of mineowners; he receives them, he listens to what they have to say, he gives them some honeyed words, and bows them out. The pit-brow women interview him; he receives them, he gives them fair words, and bows them out.

Mr. F. S. POWELL (Wigan): I rise to Order.

The CHAIRMAN: The Amendment the hon. Member has given Notice of refers to any Secretary of State?

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: I think, therefore, he must proceed to the general substantial question with which he wishes to deal.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: Yes; but this Bill will be passed at the time when the right hon. Gentleman the present Home Secretary is in Office, and it will fall to his lot to put the powers under it into operation. Well, I do not think the right hon. Gentleman the present Home Secretary will put that pressure on his Colleagues, and upon the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury, and the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, which will be necessary in order to provide sufficient inspection for the adequate safeguarding of the lives and interests of hundreds of thousands of our working men of this country. Therefore, I wish to furnish a certain amount of statutory support for the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary. I propose to take away from him the power of saying that he is not compelled by Act of Parliament to give the inspecting staff the strength which is needed, according to his own admission, to do the work with which they are charged. I beg, therefore, to move, in the first instance, in line 26, the substitution of the word "shall" for the word "may."

Amendment proposed, in page 19, line 26, leave out the word "may," in order to insert the word "shall."—(*Mr. Arthur O' Connor.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'may' stand part of the Clause."

Mr. WARMINGTON (Monmouth, W.): I must say the argument the hon. Member uses in favour of the insertion of the word "shall" appears to me to apply to a Home Secretary such as we do not now possess. I do not at all agree with the hon. Member's animadversions upon the right hon. Gentleman the present Home Secretary, because I think we are very much indebted to him for what he has done. If an alteration such as the hon. Member proposes is required at all in this clause it certainly is not necessary in the case of the right hon. Gentleman the present Home Secretary. It may apply to his Successors.

Question put, and *agreed to*.

MR. TOMLINSON: I beg to move, in line 27, after "persons," to insert "holding first-class certificates under this Act." I have no doubt that under existing circumstances Home Secretaries will always consider that the holding of first-class certificates shall be a necessary qualification for Inspectors; but there may come a time when we may have some Secretaries of a more sanguine temperament, who may consider that such a qualification is not essential in the case of Inspectors. In order to guard against such a possibility I beg to move this Amendment, which will preclude the appointment of Inspectors who are not qualified in the way I propose. The reason for inserting this Amendment is rather strengthened by the addition we have made in the Bill providing that under managers shall be certificated.

Amendment proposed, in page 19, line 27, after "persons," insert "holding first-class certificates under this Act."—(*Mr. Tomlinson.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. W. ABRAHAM (Glamorgan, Rhondda): I hope the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary will not accept this Amendment. I cannot see the consistency of hon. Gentlemen who have been advocating a second-class certificate for managers, and who have been telling the House that which no doubt is true, that among the managers that now hold certificates for service the best of them have been those who have been drawn from the ranks of practical men—I say I cannot understand the consistency of those hon. Members who, having taken up that position, contend that Inspectors should be required to hold first-class certificates. If practical second-class certificate-holders make the best managers, surely they will also make the best Inspectors. I hope the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary will not accept this Amendment.

COLONEL BLUNDELL (Lancashire, S.W., Ince): I beg to support the Amendment. I feel sure that it would be a great mistake to appoint anyone as Inspector who did not hold a first-class certificate, or who did not obtain one within a very short period of his appointment. I trust this Amendment will be accepted.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I must say I cannot accept this Amendment, and for two reasons; first, because the best Inspectors are not always first-class certificated men; and secondly, because, if you insist upon Inspectors having first-class certificates, you will exclude practical men from the position of Inspectors who would be most useful in that capacity.

MR. TOMLINSON: I hope it will not be supposed that I wish to exclude from the position of Inspectors any class of men or any individual who may have ability enough for the duty of inspection; but I must say that the work of inspecting mines is a work of the greatest responsibility and of the greatest difficulty. It is one of the most difficult duties which a man can be engaged on. With regard to what has fallen from the hon. Member for the Rhondda Division of Glamorgan, I would point out that no new manager can be appointed who has not obtained a first-class certificate, and that those possessing service certificates are rapidly diminishing. As to second-class certificates, I have not the least wish to see second-class supersede the first. We know there are many duties which can be performed by persons under a second-class certificate which depend more upon practical knowledge than theoretical knowledge; but I think, in the case of Inspectors, that those men should have practical knowledge, and should have theoretical knowledge as well. If the Inspectors are not qualified in that way I fail to see how they can perform their duties. I think it is essential, for the due inspection of mines, that the minimum qualification for an Inspector should be as high as that of a person whose work he has to supervise.

MR. PICKARD (Yorks, W.R., Normanton): The hon. and learned Member need not be alarmed in this matter. We know this—that several working men who are qualified to pass examinations have made application to be examined, and as yet the Home Office have never accepted any of their applications, or allowed them to be examined for the position of mining Inspector.

Question, "That those words be there inserted," put, and *negatived.*

Mr. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck): In the absence of the hon. Member for the Mid Division of Durham (Mr. W. Crawford) I beg to move the Amendment which stands in his name—namely, in line 27, after "Inspectors," to leave out "under whatever title he may from time to time fix." The object of this Amendment is to prevent any appointment being made of what may take the character of a Chief Inspector of mines. We take it that the words "under whatever title he may from time to time fix" will cover a Chief Inspector. We therefore prefer that if there is to be a Head Inspector he shall be a Minister of Mines, with a seat in this House, to whom all questions affecting the working of mines can be properly and directly addressed, and from whom we may expect to have a direct answer. Therefore, I beg leave to move this Amendment. It is an Amendment which we believe has been accepted by the colliery owners, who are also Members of this House. I hope that the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary will see his way to accept it.

Amendment proposed, in page 19, line 97, after "Inspectors," leave out "under whatever title he may from time to time fix."—(*Mr. Fenwick.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

Mr. MATTHEWS: I can assure the hon. Gentleman that those words on the Bill have no relation whatever to the appointment of a Chief Inspector. No such idea was in our minds. They were put in in consequence of two difficulties under which Assistant Inspectors labour. An Inspector of mines has under an order in Council seven years added on to his service for superannuation purposes. That is not only the case with Inspectors of Mines, but it is the case with all public servants who are required to bring certain qualifications into their offices which they have not acquired in the service. But it is only Inspectors who are mentioned in the order in Council and not "Assistant Inspectors," and it is a question whether, legally speaking, Assistant Inspectors are entitled to those privileges.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: Issue a new Warrant.

Mr. MATTHEWS: The hon. Member for East Donegal says that a new Warrant would enable us to surmount the difficulty. Of course it would; but then there are a series of instances in which the competitive examination ordinarily required is dispensed with in consideration of the qualifications and the nature of the employment of the applicant. Well, it is a question again whether Assistant Inspectors are examined in these cases in the same way as Inspectors. The object with which these words were inserted is to relieve the Assistant Inspectors from this double disability, or at any rate, ambiguity. That is the whole reason why it was thought desirable to insert words of that kind. I will undertake that steps shall be taken to prevent a difficulty of the kind referred to by the hon. Member opposite arising.

Mr. W. CRAWFORD (Durham, Mid): I think the right hon. Gentleman's object would be much more satisfactorily secured if he adopted the words—"may appoint any fit persons to be Inspectors or Assistant Inspectors." If the only difficulties which arise in this matter are those which the right hon. Gentleman has referred to—namely, the difficulty of seven years addition in case of superannuation, and the difficulty of dispensing with examination, I think the right hon. Gentleman would effect his purpose by the adoption of those words—those words, or words of a similar nature; such words are quite common in Acts of Parliament of this kind. The difficulty which occurred to my hon. Friend the Member for the Wansbeck Division of Northumberland did not occur to me; but at the same time, persons reading Acts of Parliament may be struck with the peculiarity of the words—"under whatever title he may from time to time fix." These words do not appear to have any apparent purpose, and if they are to give the Treasury power to give Assistant Inspectors an allowance of seven years in considering superannuation, that object would be equally effected by the words I propose.

Mr. MATTHEWS: The words the hon. Gentleman proposes would not in the least meet the difficulty as the Order in Council refers to Inspectors only, and not to Assistant Inspectors. The object in view is to give Assistant Inspectors, who are not called "Inspectors," the benefit of the superannuation warrant, and also to provide that they shall not be under the ordinary regulations and requirements in regard to competitive examinations. To adopt the words proposed by the hon. Member would not have the effect of bringing those persons under the head of Inspectors mentioned in the Treasury Warrant.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: What is the meaning of the words lower down?—

> "Every such Inspector is referred to in this Act as an Inspector, and the Inspector of the district means the Inspector who is for the time being assigned to the district or portion of the United Kingdom with reference to which the term is used."

Mr. MATTHEWS: They are all Inspectors, but the insertion of the words in the clause to which exception is taken is put in in order that no assistant master may be regarded as an Inspector. Though his title may be only Assistant Inspector, yet he is virtually an Inspector, and should have the privileges of such.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: Is it meant that the word "Inspector" remaining alone on the Bill will give the Home Secretary power to appoint any number of different classes of officials who will be able to act as Inspectors?

Mr. MATTHEWS: Certainly; it is intended to give such officials the same privileges as to pensions.

Mr. PICKARD: That being so, I hope the hon. Member for the Wansbeck Division will withdraw the Amendment.

Mr. FENWICK: I withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Mr. W. ABRAHAM (Glamorgan, Rhondda): In the absence of the hon. Member for Merionethshire (Mr. T. E. Ellis), I beg to move, in page 19, line 3, after "Inspector," insert—

> "Provided, [illegible] o person shall be appointed to act as Inspector of mines in Wales and Monmouthshire, who is not thoroughly conversant with the Welsh language."

This Amendment is evidently justifiable, and is essentially necessary to enable an Inspector to discharge his duties in these two important districts in question. The necessity for the Amendment is so palpable that I take it that it is unnecessary for me to go further into the matter than simply to move the Amendment.

Amendment proposed,

> In page 19, line 3, after "Inspector" insert—"Provided that no person shall be appointed to act as Inspector of mines in Wales and Monmouthshire, who is not thoroughly conversant with the Welsh language."—(*Mr. W. Abraham.*)

Mr. MATTHEWS: I cannot accept this Amendment—[*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] Well, let the hon. Member consider what he is asking. We have in Wales, I think, two districts, if my memory serves me right. Well, under this Amendment no Inspector can be appointed to either of these districts, unless thoroughly conversant with the Welsh language. In that way he would disturb the whole system of Inspectors, preventing the flow of promotion, or the changing of Inspectors from England and other parts of Great Britain to Wales. At present, there is only one system for the whole of the United Kingdom; there is a flow throughout the system, and if there is a vacancy in one part of it, it can be filled up from another part without difficulty. The hon. Member wishes the Principality to be a close preserve not only for his own countrymen, but for a class of his own countrymen—namely, those who are thoroughly conversant with the Welsh language. The hon. Member desires that Welsh Inspectorships shall be shot out from the ordinary course of the Service, and reserved to a special class of candidates who are conversant with the Welsh language. Well, I, as Secretary of State, should be unable to carry out the object of the hon. Member. I am incapable of forming a correct opinion as to whether or not a man is conversant with the Welsh language, and in order to ascertain whether or not a candidate had such qualification, I should be obliged to appoint a body of examiners. I do appeal to the hon. Member not to press the Amendment. We have suffered enough already from questions of nationality. Is there any remedy for crystallizing nationality in an Act of Parliament in this manner? I would earnestly appeal to hon. Gentlemen to leave this matter to the discretion of those who have to carry out the appointments. For my own part, I aim as much as I can at getting Welsh speaking Inspectors for Wales. From my own experience I can say that it is very often almost impossible to secure men as Inspectors who have the qualification of a thorough knowledge of the Welsh language.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I am bound to say that I do not think the answer of the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary on this claim of the Welsh for consideration is either conclusive or satisfactory. The right hon. Gentleman appears to consider this appeal entirely as a question of feeling and of national jealousy on the part of the Welsh. Well, I can assure the right hon. Gentleman that it is nothing of the kind. If I were to draw a moral by referring to another case altogether, in order to show the danger of deciding matters upon the testimony of those who do not speak your language, I would draw attention to the Lipski trial, which is now under the consideration of the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary. It is beyond the scope of this discussion to make more than a passing reference to that case, but I think it will show you the importance of having in connection with mines Inspectors properly qualified to speak the language of the country. I would urge this consideration upon the Committee that where the lives of our fellow subjects are concerned, and it is necessary to make investigations after accidents have happened, it appears to be above all things essential that the Inspectors and others who have to decide upon the liability or where blame for negligence is at all, should be, at any rate, as conversant with the Welsh language as to be able to form something like a correct opinion from the statements presented to them by persons who can speak only Welsh. The Amendment now under consideration provides that no person shall be appointed to act as Inspector of Mines in Wales and Monmouthshire who is not thoroughly conversant with the Welsh language. I would appeal to the hon. Gentleman the Member for Rhondda (Mr. W. Abraham) to withdraw the word "thoroughly." I think that if that word were struck out it would go a long way toward lessening the objection of the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary to this proposal, because, while no doubt it would be difficult to find persons "thoroughly" conversant with the Welsh language to fulfil these duties, I do not think, from what I know, that it will be difficult to find persons who are sufficiently conversant with that language to perform the duties of Inspectors. The right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary mentioned, in the course of his argument, that he himself had experienced great difficulty in finding a man to fill one of these posts who could speak, or, rather, was conversant with the Welsh language. Now, I do not know whether that was an Inspectorship connected with the Welsh quarries which was recently filled up, but all I can say is that I had something to do with the recommending of a gentleman for that post. I do not think that the gentleman I recommended obtained the post, but he was a Welshman, and he had a thoroughly familiar knowledge with the Welsh language. Of course I do not know the reasons which may have weighed with the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary in refusing to appoint the gentleman I recommended, but I am quite sure that it was not because of his want of acquaintance with the Welsh language. This gentleman was only one of a good number who knew quite enough about the Welsh language, at any rate, to be competent to perform the duties of an Inspector, and who were fit persons to be appointed. And, again, I do not think there is anything in the argument of the right hon. Gentleman with reference to the promotion of Assistant Inspectors from other parts of the country. Surely you can appoint Welshmen as Assistant Inspectors, and promote them in due course, but whether you do so or not there is no question of excluding Welsh Inspectors from the line of promotion in other parts of the country. As I understand it, you only want Inspectors for two districts in Wales. It does not appear to me that the extension of the field for the promotion of Assistant Inspectors throughout the country should do away with the desirability of appointing as Chief Inspectors in Wales those who have a knowledge of the Welsh language. I think the interesting scene which has taken place in London within the last few days in connection with the Welsh Eisteddfod goes far to prove that the Welsh language is neither so difficult to learn, nor to speak, nor so impossible to understand as the right hon. Gentleman seems to imagine. The arguments which the right hon. Gentleman has used are like other arguments of Toryism—somewhat exploded and inadequate.

MR. LLEWELLYN (Somerset, N.): I think this is an Amendment which the Government might very reasonably accept. This is not a sentimental Amendment, but an eminently practical one. It appears to me that the duty of an Inspector, especially in coal mines, is very important indeed, and should an Inspector not be able to speak the language of those about him he must be to a certain extent, though not entirely, dependent upon interpreters. In receiving evidence, or in hearing evidence given before inquiries, also in regard to getting information from the miners underground and above ground, it is absolutely impossible an Inspector can understand all the men wish to indicate to him unless he is able to speak their language, and to understand it thoroughly. I am perfectly well aware that should the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary to-morrow morning be called upon to fill up a vacancy in the Welsh districts it would be difficult for him to find a suitable candidate with a knowledge of the Welsh tongue, but I do hope that in future Inspectorships will be given to Welsh speaking candidates, or, at any rate, that preference will be given to such candidates. Men will qualify in that which will be by no means the least important part of the education they ought to possess.

MR. A. J WILLIAMS (Glamorgan, S.): I am sure that if the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary had been in the House during the delivery of the short but effective speech we have just listened to he would have been disposed to accept this Amendment, at all events, with the qualification I intend to suggest. That qualification is, that no person should be appointed as Inspector of Welsh mines who is not thoroughly conversant with the Welsh tongue, when a properly qualified person possessing this qualification can be obtained. Such a form of words, I think, would meet one of the difficulties suggested by the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary. I quite admit there may be a difficulty at times in obtaining the services of a Welshman speaking the Welsh tongue. [At this point the right hon. Gentleman entered, and took his seat.] Now, that the right hon. Gentleman has returned to his place, let me earnestly repeat my hope that with the modification this Amendment may be accepted. The modification I suggest is, that the appointment to Inspectorships of mines in Wales shall only be given to Welshmen, if a properly qualified Welsh speaking man can be obtained. As a Welshman, I am ashamed to say that I do not thoroughly know Welsh, but living as I have done for many years in Wales, and having been present in Courts of Justice, places of all others where one can realize all the objections to work being done by men who are not familiar with the language, I can speak from personal knowledge of the absolute and essential importance of having Inspectors of mines, if possible, who can understand the Welsh colliers, both above and under ground. There is one fact which has a very important bearing upon this question. I have stated in public—and I repeat here—that the Welsh people have been for centuries a subservient race, and the effect of that is—I do not mean to state it in an offensive sense at all—the dominating race in Wales has been the English, and it has created naturally a feeling of diffidence on the part of the people in expressing themselves as it were in a foreign tongue. I think it is essential that if we are to carry out properly the system of inspection of Welsh collieries, we should do all we can to get Welsh speaking Inspectors. It only shows how strange is the ignorance which exists in this country of the Welsh people that the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary should suppose we are pressing this Amendment in a purely national spirit, from a narrow and selfish feeling for Welsh nationality. It is really because we feel that the coal industry, one of the largest industries in the Kingdom, and which is so largely developed in my county and in Wales generally, is not being properly dealt with, when you have an English-speaking man occupying such a responsible position as that of Inspector of mines I do not desire to occupy the time of the Committee unduly, therefore, I will conclude by expressing an earnest hope that the Government will accept this very reasonable and proper Amendment.

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR (Clackmannan, &c.): Let me remind the Committee of a very recent case in which this House gave effect to a national wish of this kind. In the course of the passing of the Crofters Bill through the House last year, an Amendment was proposed and accepted that one of the three Crofter Commissioners should be conversant with the Gaelic tongue. It seems that anyone going about among miners with the object of obtaining information should possess among his other qualifications that of speaking the language of the miners, always assuming that persons capable of performing the duties of the position, and speaking the language of the men, can be found.

Mr. WOOTTON ISAACSON (Tower Hamlets, Stepney): I represent in this House the largest collieries in South Wales, and I think I am entitled to form an opinion as to having Inspectors who know the Welsh tongue. Now, as a matter of fact the colliers in our collieries in South Wales are not Welshmen. They are principally Yorkshiremen, and men who come from the North generally, from Cumberland and other places. We did at one time adopt the principle of only employing Welsh Inspectors and overseers, but we found that the system was impracticable simply because there was a prevading feeling that the speaking of Welsh was merely a pastime which Welshmen like to keep up, simply to maintain their nationality.

Mr. W. ABRAHAM (Glamorgan, Rhondda): What part of Wales is that in?

Mr. WOOTTON ISAACSON: I think the hon. Member for the Rhondda Division of Glamorgan (Mr. W. Abraham) knows as well as anybody that I represent the largest collieries in South Wales — [Mr. W. Abraham: Monmouthshire.]—and he knows also that the people there do not speak Welsh. I maintain further that Welsh is not the language of the country. If Welsh were the language of the country, of course we should insist upon Welsh being spoken; but English is the language of the country. Will you tell me what we should do if we had to rely upon Welsh colliers? What should we do in Wales if we could not go to places outside of Wales for our men? Why the pits would stop, for we should not be able to work them. I appeal to the testimony of one great man who did more for South Wales than any other man—namely, Mr. Crawshaw Bailey. He brought all his colliers from Westmoreland; they did not know a single word of Welsh, and yet they managed to get on. I maintain that the feeling that Welsh should only be employed is merely a matter of Welsh sentiment and Welsh nationality which has lately sprung up. I can assure the hon. Member for the Rhondda Division that he is not doing his countrymen a service in advocating the employment of only Welsh speaking Inspectors, because he must know that the majority of the colliers in Wales do not understand Welsh. We should be doing these men an injustice if we employed men speaking only Welsh. I shall oppose the Amendment which has been made by the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: I should be sorry to be a party to the advocacy of anything so absurd as the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Stepney Division of the Tower Hamlets (Mr. Isaacson) supposes. He imagines that it is proposed that an Inspector of Welsh mines is to understand Welsh and no other language. No such proposal has ever been made.

Mr. WARMINGTON: I may tell the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Stepney Division of the Tower Hamlets (Mr. Isaacson) that I have always thought that I represented the Monmouthshire colliery valley, and I was rather surprised to hear the hon. Gentleman say that in the Monmouthshire Valley the Welsh language is not spoken, or that there are not many men who are employed in the mines there who can speak the Welsh language and speak that language only.

Mr. WOOTTON ISAACSON: There are some I admit who can only speak Welsh.

Mr. WARMINGTON: This is not a question of national jealousy. It is nothing more than a practical question, and it is only as a business and practical question that I venture to press it upon the attention of the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary. There are many men engaged in the Welsh mines, especially in those in the Rhondda Valley and in my own constituency, who speak Welsh, and who speak that language only, and they desire that there shall be an Inspector appointed with whom they can directly converse, and who shall not be obliged to employ an interpreter. If that applies in Monmouthshire, it applies with very much more force throughout some of the divisions of Glamorganshire. I, however, am only speaking now of Monmouthshire and South Wales, and, with submission to the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary, I cannot believe that it is a difficult thing to find men not only conversant with the Welsh tongue, but having such an acquaintance with mining as to make them fit and proper Inspectors. I know—and so does the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary know—that there have been many Welsh-speaking men who have been anxious to be appointed Inspectors, and who have produced before him, and also before his Predecessors, certificates of qualification and efficiency, which I should have thought were sufficient to show that they were eminently fitted to act as Inspectors. This Amendment is necessary in order to ensure that the men shall have confidence in the Inspectors; and surely the men are those who are mostly interested in this question. I hope that the Government will see fit to accept this reasonable Amendment.

SIR HUSSEY VIVIAN (Swansea, District): Mr. Courtney, I must confess I was electrified by the statement of the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Stepney Division of the Tower Hamlets (Mr. Isaacson), who thinks he represents the largest Welsh colliery. I recommend him to spend a little time in that district and to inform himself rather more closely as to the condition of his own mine, because I am quite certain that if he does he will find that a very large majority of those he employs even in Monmouthshire speak Welsh as their native tongue. I can assure him and the Committee that the Welsh language has, instead of decreasing in the hills of Glamorganshire, increased. I represented the county of Glamorganshire for 27 years, and I perfectly remember that when I first went to the Rhondda Valley there was no road up that valley and the population was purely Welsh speaking. I have constantly visited the Rhondda Valley since, and I always thought I should find the Welsh language dying out and the English language increasing; but the contrary is the fact. [Mr. W. ABRAHAM: Clwych, clwych.] The very last time I had the honour of addressing an audience in the Rhondda Valley I found that the Welsh language had in no way decreased. The immigration into the Rhondda Valley and into the colliery districts of Glamorganshire is an almost purely Welsh immigration, and it comes from districts which are more entirely Welsh speaking than perhaps any portion of Glamorganshire itself—that is to say, immigration into these districts is from Cardiganshire and Brecknockshire and other portions of Wales which are purely Welsh speaking; and therefore I can vouch for it that no change has taken place in regard to the nationality of the great bulk of the mining population in Glamorganshire during the last 30 years. I venture to urge on the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary the importance of accepting this Amendment, because he must bear in mind that the duty of an Inspector is not only to inspect a mine as anyone could inspect a mine who is acquainted with mining, but he is also to be in touch with the men. He ought to sympathize with the feelings of the men, and the men ought to be able to turn to him as a man to whom they can regularly communicate, and communicate in their native tongue. This cannot be the case if the Inspector is simply an Englishman. There is a very strong and very proper national feeling. I am not advocating Wales for the Welsh, but I am advocating the Welsh for the world. I do not advocate this in a narrow national sense at all. I advocate it simply that a man who has to perform the delicate duties of an Inspector and to ascertain what may be wrong in collieries should, as far as possible, be within touch of the people, and it is upon this ground I think it is desirable that the Inspector of Welsh collieries should be a Welsh-speaking Inspector. As to the difficulty of obtaining Welsh-speaking Inspectors, I think there is none. I have never found any difficulty in obtaining an agent who speaks Welsh; and I am quite sure that if it were known that a Welsh-speaking Inspector would be appointed you would have as competent men applying for that situation as you would have if it was known that the appointment was open to the whole of the mining community. Depend upon it there are quite as good colliers in Wales as in England, and that no practical difficulty would arise in obtaining the services of first-class men speaking Welsh to act as Inspectors. I therefore do very strongly urge that this Amendment, which, I think, is a most reasonable one, should be accepted.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. STUART-WORTLEY) (Sheffield, Hallam): If hon. Gentlemen opposite could promise that if we accept this Amendment there would at once be forthcoming a large supply of gentlemen speaking Welsh competent to act as Inspectors it would be difficult to gainsay them. With regard to the appointment of Inspectors of Welsh mines, we have to consider not only knowledge of the language, but also the efficiency of the Inspectors. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers), when Home Secretary, justified in this House the non-appointment of a Welsh-speaking Inspector, because, as he said, the South Wales district is the most dangerous of all, and requires for its supervision great experience. In the opinion of the right hon. Gentleman, the ability to speak Welsh, especially when the two assistants could do so, was not the most important qualification for an Inspector. The right hon. Gentleman in respect to the same case, also reminded the House that there was another very important consideration, and that was the safety of the men employed. The question is, whether you should have a hard and fast inflexible rule which should prevent you promoting to the position men who are most deserving and who may possess every qualification save that of being able to speak Welsh.

SIR EDWARD REED (Cardiff): I can see the force of some of the observations which have fallen from the Treasury Bench; but I must confess I have been most impressed with the fact that they desire more than anything else to keep the Welsh colliery districts open for the promotion of English Inspectors. That, I understand, is the proposition which the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for the Home Department (Mr. Stuart-Wortley) has just laid down. The hon. Gentleman referred to the action of the right hon. Gentleman the late Home Secretary (Mr. Childers) who, he said, in the case of a specific appointment, appointed a Gentleman who was unable to speak Welsh; but who was the most competent person he could select.

MR. STUART-WORTLEY: The right hon. Gentleman's justification for the appointment he made was that the superiority of the Gentleman's attainments outweighed his inability to speak Welsh.

SIR EDWARD REED: No one on this side of the House desires to have any incompetent person appointed, and we repudiate altogether the proposition that there is any connection between this Amendment and the appointment of inefficient persons. The hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for the Home Department added that the safety of the miners must be considered. Is it to be presumed that the Welsh Representatives are indifferent to the safety of the miners in proposing this Amendment? On the contrary, this Amendment is proposed in the interests of the safety of the miners. I must confess I was very much surprised at the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary putting this forward as if it were a question of mere national sentiment. It is one of the most practical questions that can possibly be brought before the House. What is the situation? The Welsh Representatives ask that the persons appointed to Inspectorships of Welsh mines may be able to speak to and be able to be spoken to by the people working in the mines. That is the proposition. What is the answer of the Government? The first answer is that if you give the Welsh miners Inspectors who can talk Welsh, you will, to a certain extent, cut off the Welsh mines from the field of promotion of English Inspectors. That is no answer at all; it cannot be accepted for a moment. We contend, and, I think, rightly, that the well-being and the satisfaction of the mining population in Wales, in a matter like the safety of the population, is the primary consideration. What is the state of feeling in Wales upon this point? The idea of the Government seems to be that there is some sentimental desire to keep the Welsh language alive. That is not the case. I speak as an Englishman knowing little of Welsh; but as one who is more or less acquainted with the Welsh-speaking districts, and I say that this Amendment is the outcome of a strong conviction on the part of the Welsh miners that it is an act of justice to them that their Inspectors should be able to speak their language. I admit that the Amendment in its present form would impose upon the Government absolutely the appointment of a Welsh-speaking Inspector to every Welsh mine. I quite see the hardship and fastness of that line, and I know that official persons naturally and most reasonably shrink from these hard and fast prescriptions. I quite understand that; but, at the same time, unless the Government are prepared to propose some change which will give the miners of Wales satisfaction on this point, I say that feeling on the part of the Government must give way to the desire of the people of Wales in this matter. I do not know whether the Committee would be at all safe in trusting even to some modification of this Amendment. I myself have tried during the evening to modify this Amendment so as to meet the difficulty I know the Government is in; but I have not been able to do so. I hope this discussion will result in some promise from the Government that they will reconsider the question and see whether they cannot on Report give us such an Amendment that will satisfy the natural and most reasonable desire of the Welsh-speaking miners to have persons inspecting mines to whom they can speak and who can speak to them.

MR. WOOTTON ISAACSON: I should like to offer a few words in explanation of what the right hon. Baronet the Member for Swansea District (Sir Hussey Vivian) has just said. The greater number of our Inspectors are not Welshmen—two-thirds are not Welshmen—and yet they manage to get on with the colliers extremely well, simply because the colliers do not happen to be Welshmen. Not more than one-third of the colliers on our large property speak Welsh. The remainder speak English. I should like to know what would be said if Scotch colliers demanded that the Inspectors of Scotch mines should be able to speak the ancient language of Scotland. Of course, that would be quite inadmissible. Why should it apply to Wales? The collieries with which I am connected have given great proof that it is not necessary. I shall certainly vote against this Amendment.

MR. TOMLINSON: There is a desire on every side of the House that whatever duties Inspectors have to perform they shall be competent to perform. I have given proof of my desire for that because I have given Notice of an Amendment which would require a knowledge of mining on the part of Inspectors. I think a knowledge of the Welsh language would be desirable if it were possible, and perhaps I might suggest that it would be advantageous to put the present proposal in this form—

> "Provided that on the appointment of an Inspector a knowledge of the Welsh language shall be taken into consideration."

That might meet the wishes of hon. Members opposite.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I do not know why if Irish miners only spoke Irish they should not have an Irish-speaking Inspector. I do not know why if a large proportion of Scotch miners only spoke Gaelic they should not have a Scotch Inspector to inspect their mines. The duty of an Inspector is to inspect, to look about him, and to find out what ought to be found out from the men. An inspector going into a large place like a coal mine and setting about ascertaining whether anything is wrong, cannot have a better means at his disposal than easy communication with the men who are in the mine. The men know every trick of the managers and those under whom they are working. But if the Inspector cannot speak the language of the men amongst whom he goes, and if the miners cannot speak his language, how can he get into communication with them? "A nod is as good as a wink to a blind horse," and if the Inspector cannot speak the language of the men in the mine, who will give him the nod or the wink? He may very often miss the point he ought to find out. There are very many cases in which miners who are afraid of their manager or their oversmen, or owners, or agents, would only be too glad to get an opportunity of conveying information to the Inspectors if they could only do it *sotto* *voce.* How is the Inspector then able to acquire this information if he is not able to understand the dialect in which the information is conveyed, or sought to be conveyed? It is of the very greatest importance that the Inspector should be not only able to speak the miner's language, but speak it colloquially and with famialiarity in dealing with the men he may have to come in contact with in the course of his inquiry. An hon. Gentleman who represents a constituency in the East of London where, I believe, there are no mines, talks about the miners of Monmouthshire as if they had no representatives in this House, and he seems to think that it is altogether an unreasonable thing that the operatives and industrials referred to should seek to have men representing them speaking their own language.

Mr. WOOTTON ISAACSON: I would inform the hon. Member that though not representing a mining constituency, I represent the largest coal mining interest in South Wales—not politically, but commercially.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: We are supposed to represent things political in this House, and we are supposed to be considering what good for the community, and not what is good for our own personal interests. I do not know what the language of the hon. Member may be, but if coal miners who speak the language in which he is so eloquent —if English miners were told that it was not at all necessary that the Inspectors who go down to inspect the mines in which they have to work should speak their language, I should like to know what they would think of it. They would consider it a rather extraordinary proceeding. If you had a Swiss or Polish Inspector ignorant of English, and said to the miners—"Oh, it is not at all necessary that the Inspectors should speak English," the absurdity of the thing would be apparant even to the hon. Gentleman himself, and yet that is exactly what he would say to the Welsh-speaking miners. Many of these miners are unable to speak any language but Welsh, and though able to make important communications to the Inspectors in that language, if the Inspectors do not understand it, will be unable altogether to communicate their views. We are told that a large number of second-class certificated managers are amongst the best men for discharging functions of this kind. I was told by a mine-owner only half-an-hour ago that his managers were a great deal sharper than the Inspectors, and could laugh at them. If that is so, and if the practical second-class certificated men as regards the details of colliery administration, are better than the theoretical first-class certificated men, surely the mere speaking of the Welsh language should not be taken as an indication that the man is wanting in the qualification of a miner. I know that amongst the Romans, according to Cicero, the knowledge of Greek that a man possessed was generally in proportion to his own reputation as a scoundrel, but I never heard before to-night that because a man was qualified by a knowledge of the Welsh language, in precisely the same proportion there was danger of the inspection which he might have to carry out suffering from his want of qualification in other things. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] Well, that was what we gathered from the words of the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary. It certainly seemed to me to mean that if you looked for the qualification of speaking Welsh on the part of an Inspector, in all probability you would diminish the chance of getting a man well qualified in other respects. I do not see why speaking Welsh should be a presumptive proof of a man's non-qualification. I am sure that if in Ireland we could secure Irish-speaking Inspectors, not only in Irish coal mines, but in everything else, we should only be too glad to have them; and we have heard to-night of the unreasonableness of the appointments of some of the officials who have to deal with the crofters in Scotland in consequence of their inability to understand the dialect of the people. The unreasonableness of these appointments has been admitted; why, then, should not a similar position be taken up with regard to this question?

Mr. MATTHEWS: I am glad to recognize the national sentiment of hon. Members. I think, by way of compromise, I might suggest these words in lieu of the Amendment if the hon. Member will withdraw it—

> "Provided always that in the appointment of Inspectors of mines in Wales and Monmouthshire among candidates otherwise equally qualified, those having a knowledge of the Welsh language shall be preferred."

I would propose the substitution of those words; I do not know whether hon. Members will agree to them.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the hon. Member for Rhondda withdraw his Amendment?

Mr. BURT (Morpeth): I appeal to the hon. Member for Rhondda to withdraw his Amendment, because I think these words of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department would very well meet the case. I would only say that, having mixed a good deal with the Welsh miners, I know that they feel very strongly on this matter. Over and over again, at Conferences where the miners of that part of the country have been represented, resolutions to this effect have been passed. I think it would be very satisfactory if the Amendment suggested by the Government were accepted.

Mr. A. J. WILLIAMS: Where will these words come in?

Mr. MATTHEWS: In the same place.

Mr. W. ABRAHAM: Then I withdraw my Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Mr. MATTHEWS: I would move the insertion of these words.

Amendment proposed,

In page 19, line 30, after "Inspector," insert—"Provided always, that in the appointment of an Inspector of mines in Wales and Monmouthshire among candidates, otherwise equally qualified persons having a knowledge of the Welsh language shall be preferred."—(*Mr. Matthews.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith): I am not sure that on Report I shall not have to move that persons having a knowledge of the Cumberland dialect should not be preferred in appointments as mining Inspectors for the Cumberland district. The dialect of Cumberland would be quite as unintelligible to the hon. Gentleman the Member for East Donegal (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) as would the dialect of the Welsh miners to an English-speaking Inspector.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I have had the honour of addressing several audiences in Cumberland, and I have never experienced any difficulty in making myself understood.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

Mr. CONYBEARE: There is a difficulty about having a certain number of practical miners on the list of Inspectors appointed. I do not wish to move an Amendment; but I think we might have an understanding as to the appointment of practical men. It is open to the Secretary of State to appoint any persons he chooses provided they are fit for the appointment. Well, there are plenty of persons who have been working miners, and there is a strong desire on the part of miners themselves that there should be some Inspectors, at all events, appointed from amongst their numbers. I hope this matter will be taken into consideration when the appointments are made.

Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): When the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) was Secretary of State for the Home Department, he laid it down as a rule that seven of the Inspectors should be taken from the working class of miners. It fell to my lot to select six of the seven for the approval of the Secretary of State. Those men were of course taken from the ranks of the miners. I should very much deprecate any departure on the part of the Home Office from that rule. It would be a distinct breach of faith if there were not seven mining Inspectors taken from the ranks of the working miners. I am sorry my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby is not present, as he would have stated all that took place on this subject when he was in Office.

Colonel BLUNDELL: I hope they had obtained certificates from the Boards of Examiners.

Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER: Certainly.

Mr. CONYBEARE: I understand that this Bill is a codification of the existing law, as well as a Bill introducing new provisions. In consequence of what the right hon. Gentleman has stated, I should like to be assured by him whether the rules which have hitherto applied, and which I think he referred to, find a place in this new measure—what guarantee have we that the rule as to the appointment of practical men will not be departed from?

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I desire to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether, in the instructions he issues to Inspectors, to which he has already referred, he will make arrangements by which the presence of the Inspector will be made known to the men working in the mine. I have had letters from more than one quarter in this country pointing out that very often men have learnt to their astonishment that an Inspector had been down the mine, and they have not known it until after the Inspector had left, and so had no opportunity of getting into conversation with him. There is nothing distinctive about an Inspector. He wears no badge nor uniform. He goes down the mine with the manager, or agent, or owner, and for what the miner can tell he may be a visitor or a partner in the firm. The men have no means of ascertaining who the Inspector is. If they did know that a certain individual coming down the mine was an Inspector probably, in certain cases, they would be able to convey to him certain information, such as he ought to possess, and which, if he did possess, would enable him to make requisitions which would have the effect of obviating danger and saving human life. I have not been able to frame an Amendment which would secure the object I have in view; but I have had communications from men in three different places, who say that they feel it a blot upon this Bill that it does not provide for any means by which the miners may recognize an Inspector when he goes down the mine.

Mr. CONYBEARE: I do not want to be at all importunate, but I do want to have a satisfactory answer to the point I have raised. I cannot find anything in the Bill referring to the appointment of working men as Inspectors. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wolverhampton (Mr. Henry H. Fowler), who endorsed what I said, referred to an understanding or precedent laid down in the Home Office on the subject. I may be mistaken, but I understood his statement to be to the effect that under the existing law there should be a certain number of practical men on the list of Inspectors. [Mr. Henry H. Fowler: No, no!] Very well, then, I do not expect to find it in the Bill, which is merely a codification of the existing law; but as the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) shook his head when the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wolverhampton (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) stated what was the rule laid down by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) I should like to know whether the right hon. Gentleman the present Home Secretary does or does not endorse what was said by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wolverhampton? I should like to know whether he will see that the custom laid down by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby will be continued, or whether he means to pursue a course exactly the reverse? If he means exactly the reverse I am afraid I should have to bring up an Amendment upon this matter myself.

Mr. MATTHEWS: I did not shake my head. I have not made the slightest change in the system, whatever it was that was laid down by my Predecessor. I have adhered to it strictly.

Mr. CONYBEARE: And will do so?

Mr. MATTHEWS: Yes, and will do so.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: The right hon. Gentleman has not answered me as to the men being enabled to recognize the Inspector when he goes down into the mine.

Mr. MATTHEWS: I can hardly understand the men failing to recognize an Inspector when he goes down the mine. I can hardly imagine an Inspector going into a colliery without being known.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: Inspectors are few and far between.

Mr. MATTHEWS: I should think there are very few collieries indeed where it is not known generally who the Inspector is and when he makes his visits. However, I will turn the matter over in my mind, and see whether it is desirable and possible to make any arrangement to meet the possibility of a difficulty such as the hon. Member suggests arising.

Mr. HANDEL COSSHAM: The names of the Inspectors are always published at the top of the mines so that everyone has access to them.

MR. PICKARD: Very few miners, as a matter of fact, know the Inspectors. In most of the collieries you never have an Inspector at the time the men are about the mines.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I do not say that there is any necessity for the Inspector to wear a badge. [*Cries of* "Divide!"] Hon. Members seem to be impatient, but whether they are or not I can assure the Committee that I mean to do what I can for men who, I think, require assistance in this matter. I shall do what I conceive to be my duty, however impatient the House of Commons may be. The right hon. Gentleman implied by his tone, if not by his words, that I was putting before the Committee a purely imaginary point. But I repeat to him what I have already said, that I have received three different communications from working colliers to the effect that they have not known, and do not know, the Inspectors when they go down into the mine. I would ask the right hon. Gentleman if he will promise on Report to bring up a clause or an Amendment which will meet this difficulty? I do not ask him to put a uniform on the Inspectors. The men themselves do not ask for that. All they want is that they shall receive information of the facts that the Inspector is in the mine in order that if they have any desire to communicate with him they may find an opportunity for doing so. It is all very well to say that the name of the Inspector is at the head of the pit, and that the colliers can communicate with him. These men are not given to writing letters. It is a very serious undertaking for most of them to read letters on the most important subjects. All they want is to know when the Inspector is in the colliery so that they may tell him what they have to complain of.

MR. BURT: What I have heard generally complained of by the working men is that notice is given to the owners of the visit of the Inspector, and to the owners only. What they want is that if notice is given to the owners or the managers it should also be given to the workmen, who would be able to find somebody to accompany the Inspector. So far as I know the men do not object to the Inspector visiting the mine without giving notice at all. They would, in fact, prefer that he should do so, so that the managers may not be prepared for him. With regard to the appointment of working men as Inspectors of Mines the law does not prohibit that, and it is not necessary to embody such a provision in this Act. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wolverhampton (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) pointed out that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) had appointed several men from the ranks of the workmen to act as Inspectors. I do not think that the present Home Secretary has followed his wholesome example in that respect to any extent, at least not to my knowledge. I do not think, however, that any provision of this kind is required in this Act.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Clause 41 (Disqualification of persons as Inspectors).

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): I wish to move the Amendment which stands in my name; in page 20, line 2, after "mine," to insert "or is a miner's agent." This Amendment, if accepted, will make the clause read that any person who is a miner's agent should not act as Inspector of mines under this measure.

Amendment proposed, in page 20, line 2, after the word "mine," to insert the words "or is a miner's agent."—(*Mr. Tomlinson.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I have no objection to those words, if the words "or mineowner" are added.

MR. TOMLINSON: I will agree to add those words.

Amendment proposed, to the proposed Amendment, after the word "agent," to insert the words "or mineowner."—(*Mr. Matthews.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES (Durham, N.W.): Before this Amendment is put I should be glad if the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department would reconsider his decision as to the acceptance of this

Amendment in the form he has referred to. Very few mineowners would seek the appointment of Inspector, but it is very possible that a large number of miner's agents would not only be eligible, but desirous of seeking such appointments. This is a very invidious Amendment, and one which I sincerely trust the hon. and learned Member for Preston will not press. We know that under the Factory Acts and other Acts of Parliament it is not at all unusual to appoint persons who have been *employés* in the various manufacturing industries to positions under those Acts; and it appears to me that a miner's agent, a man who has had large experience, and who is trusted by those with whom he is associated, is essentially a very proper person to become a candidate for this post. I cannot conceive, in connection with mines, any individual who would be more eligible for this appointment than one who has been trusted by his fellow workmen to such an extent as to obtain the position of agent to one of their powerful societies. I think myself that no grievance would accrue to the mineowners from such an appointment. Undoubtedly, if a miner's agent were appointed to that position, the exigencies of his office would require that he should at once resign his position as miner's agent; but, so far as the terms of the hon. Member's Amendment goes, it would render the miner's agent ineligible to become a candidate, however determined he may be to resign his position as miner's agent. [Mr. TOMLINSON: No, no!] If that be not so, and if that interpretation is not put upon the Amendment by the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary, who is a distinguished lawyer, I shall be perfectly willing to accept it, and shall say no more.

MR. TOMLINSON: The object of the Amendment is simply to prevent a miner's agent from acting in both capacities.

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES: Then I accept it.

MR. WARMINGTON (Monmouth, W.): I think it would be better to frame the clause in this way—to say that no person appointed as an Inspector shall practice as a miner's agent.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Proposed Amendment, as amended, put, and *agreed to.*

Mr. Atherley-Jones

MR. MASON (Lanark, Mid): I desire to add certain words at the end of this clause to cover the extension of it, which we require against Inspectors being partners in collieries and mines. I think this provision is especially necessary, now that we have the Limited Liability Act in operation. I will not trouble the Committee with many reasons why this Amendment should be adopted, but simply say that there are Inspectors of Mines who hold shares in undertakings of this kind, and that is a reason why, in my opinion, no Inspector ought to be allowed either directly or indirectly to have an interest in any mine or colliery within the district under his charge.

Amendment proposed,

In page 20, line 4, to add at the end—"No Inspector shall be a partner or have any interest directly or indirectly in any mine or colliery within the district under his charge."—(*Mr. Mason.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

MR. WARMINGTON: I wish to say that I do not quite approve the words, "directly or indirectly," in the Amendment of the hon. Member for Mid Lanark. I should prefer words such as —"Shareholder or having a share in the mines and collieries in the district under his control."

MR. MASON: My wish is to make the clause very expressive of my meaning—that no Inspector shall have any interest directly or indirectly. I think, on consideration, the hon. Member will, perhaps, see that this is a better wording for that purpose.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 42 (Powers of Inspectors).

MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.W.): I rise to propose the Amendment standing in my name, which raises no contentious matter whatever; and it is one which I think will appeal to all hon. Members. Probably there are few Members of this House who do not own a horse, and, rightly or wrongly, the feeling has got abroad that horses in mines are not kindly treated. I do not intend to bring forward any case for the purpose of harrowing the feelings of hon. Members of this House, whose enlightened sympathies I feel sure I shall carry with me; but if it were necessary, I could bring the evidence of persons to show that within their knowledge cases have occurred in which horses in mines have died through thirst.

Amendment proposed, in page 20, line 19, after "thereto," to insert "including the care and treatment of the horses and other animals used in the mine."—(*Mr. Cunninghame Graham.*)

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I am quite willing to accept the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman in principle; but I would suggest a slight alteration in order to make it practical. I would substitute the words "or relating to the care or treatment of the horses for "including the care and treatment of the horses."

MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM: I have such a high opinion of the noble animal which I desire to protect, that I shall be glad to make the change which the right hon. Gentleman refers to in my Amendment. I was already aware that the Amendment was somewhat badly drawn.

Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment, to leave out "including the care and treatment of the horses," in order to insert "or relating to the care or treatment of the horses." —(*Mr. Matthews.*)

Question, "That those words be there substituted," put, and *agreed to.*

Proposed Amendment, as amended, put, and *agreed to.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 43 (Notice by Inspector of causes of danger not expressly provided against).

MR. A. H. DYKE ACLAND (York, W.R., Rotherham): The Amendment which I rise to move is very simple in its object. It deals with the time to be allowed to the owner before he sends notice of objection in case the Inspector of the mine or colliery has condemned anything in the mine as dangerous or defective or tending in that direction. The question is—how long should the owner take before he sends in notice of appeal? The clause says it shall be 20 days, but I am of opinion that that period is too long; and I propose by this Amendment to say that seven days shall be allowed to the owner to consider whether he will send in notice or not.

Amendment proposed, in page 20, line 41, after "within," leave out the word "twenty," and insert the word "seven."—(*Mr. A. H. Dyke Acland.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'twenty' stand part of the Clause."

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): I think that 20 days named in the clause is not too long for the purpose of sending in notice, and I think some reason should be given why that period should be reduced before the clause is altered.

MR. BURT (Morpeth): This Amendment deals with cases of real danger in mines, and I hope the Government will consent to an alteration of the clause. It is quite possible that during the time that the owner is considering whether he shall send in notice a terrible accident may happen; and therefore I think that 20 days is too long a period to be allowed for the purpose of considering whether he shall send in a notice or not.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I am myself of opinion that 20 days specified in the clause is, perhaps, too long a time. I have followed the existing Act in this case; but I was going to suggest that 10 days should be substituted. I am prepared to accept the principle of the hon. Member's Amendment without alteration.

Question put, and *negatived.*

Question, "That the word 'ten' be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

Amendment proposed, in page 21, line 6, after the word "within," leave out the word "twenty," and insert the word "seven." — (*Mr. A. H. Dyke Acland.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'twenty' stand part of the Clause."

MR. MATTHEWS: Here, as the hon. Member will observe, I have again followed the wording of the existing Act. With regard to the time to be allowed in case of an award, I propose to leave the time to be fixed by the arbitrator, because, as the hon. Member will be aware, although one award may be a very easy matter, another may be very difficult, and might occupy even months. Therefore, as far as the time goes in this case, I think it would be better to leave the arbitrator to say how much should be allowed; but with regard to notices in respect of which no objection is made, I am bound to say that I think seven days would be rather a short time. Perhaps here also the hon. Member will be willing to compromise, and agree to 14 days, which I am prepared to assent to, and the time in the case of award to be left, as I have pointed out, to be determined by the arbitrator.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): The right hon. Gentleman is somewhat under a misapprehension as to the character and scope of the matter to be dealt with under this clause. Now, if the right hon. Gentleman will look at the initial words of the clause on page 20 he will see that it is only a matter of detail which can be brought under the operation of the section; it is not a matter involved in any work that can extend over a period of three months, and it is, therefore, not a matter requiring a very long notice. I suppose in every case that the thing complained of could be immediately dealt with in accordance with the request of the Inspector. But the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary seems to think that the Inspector under this clause may require a manager or owner to make some fundamental change in the way of working his colliery. But that is not the case; it is to provide only for a matter of detail in every day practice, and therefore his unwillingness to accept seven days appears to me to be without any reasonable foundation. There is no reason why the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary should appeal to the hon. Member behind me to compromise the matter as between 20 and some other number of days. Seven days, in my opinion, is sufficient both with regard to the notice and for compliance with the award after the matter has been brought to the attention of the manager. Looking at the facts of the case, I am quite certain that the right hon. Gentleman has taken an exaggerated view of it.

Mr. TOMLINSON: I do not think it can be said that seven days is sufficient both for the notice and compliance with the award. There are many cases in which it is conceivable that this would be wholly insufficient, and that being so I think it is not unreasonable to expect that the suggestion of my right hon. Friend should be accepted.

Mr. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck): Under the alteration proposed by the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department the obligation of the owner to rectify defects which exist does not begin until after he has had 10 days' notice. Sub-section 3 goes on the assumption that the arbitrators have declared in their award that certain dangers exist, and now the proposal of the Government is, that, if the owner refuses to remedy defects and forces the complainant to go to the arbitrator, the period within which those defects are to be remedied is to be further lengthened. In my opinion, seven days is quite long enough for the purpose we have in view, after reference is made to an arbitrator, and therefore I hope the hon. Member will abide by his Amendment.

Mr. A. H. DYKE ACLAND: I think that where reasonable diligence is shown the period of 10 days would be short enough, and that we might accept the alteration of my Amendment which the right hon. Gentleman proposes.

Mr. MATTHEWS: We have to deal with two cases—one where the owner fails to comply with the requisition or notice, and the other where the case goes to arbitration. In the former, I am willing to agree to a period of seven days, but with regard to the latter I think it should be left to the arbitrator to fix the time. The time fixed will not be necessarily a long one, it may be two or three days, or even a shorter time.

Mr. FENWICK: But I point out that the case only goes to the arbitrator after the owner has refused to comply. Here is the case in which actual danger exists, and although the owner has refused to comply with the representation of the Inspector, you still seek to lengthen out the time notwithstanding as I have said dangers have been proved to exist, and the owner has resisted the notice given to him in the first case.

Mr. TOMLINSON: I remind the hon. Gentleman opposite that the refusal on the part of the owner may arise on a question of principle. The question might for, instance be, one of electric lighting, and it is quite possible that the owner may have an arguable case as to whether the system of lighting carried on is not preferable to that proposed to be substituted for it. I do not think we should proceed in this Bill in such a manner as to check enterprise in the direction of scientific discovery.

MR. BURT: If I am correct in understanding that the right hon. Gentleman is prepared to accept the period of 10 days I think my hon. Friends will do well to agree to that proposal.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Amendment proposed, in page 21, line 6, after "within" leave out "twenty" and insert "ten."—(*Mr. Matthews.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'twenty' stand part of the Clause."

MR. MATTHEWS: There is a little difficulty in the wording of this Clause, and I suggest that after having made the alteration of substituting "ten" for "twenty" we should modify the wording slightly on Report.

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I wish to point out that, although there is power given to the arbitrators to decide whether a certain thing is or is not dangerous, I do not see anything in this clause to require the owner to do anything within a specific time.

Question put, and *negatived.*

Question, "That the word 'ten' be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

Clause 43, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 44 (Annual reports of inspection).

MR. DONALD CRAWFORD (Lanark, N.E.): This clause, as it stands, is one which imposes no duty on the Inspector of inspecting the collieries in his district. It says that every Inspector of a district under this Act shall make an annual report of his proceedings during the preceding year to a Secretary of State, which report shall be laid before both Houses of Parliament. There is not a word in the Bill or any existing Act of Parliament which says the Inspector is ever to inspect the pits at all, and the only way in which that duty is deduced from the Act is from some words in the previous clause. Now, if that Act had worked well in practice I should not have been inclined to raise any difficulty on this ground; but I can only say that, in the part of Scotland which I represent, there is a great deal of complaint that the inspections are exceedingly inefficient, and it remains to be seen whether that feeling exists in other parts of the country. In Lanarkshire it often happens that a pit is not inspected for three years. Now, under this Bill the Inspector plays a very considerable part, a great deal of responsibility rests upon him, and a very important duty is expected to be done by him with regard to the safety of the colliers. If you say there shall be inspection, if by the scheme of the Act you trust to inspection, but that inspection does not take place, there is great danger. Now, I propose that some degree of precision should be given to the injunctions laid upon the Inspector, and the limit I propose is, that he should visit all the collieries at least four times a-year. I am not bigotted in respect of the particular limit I propose. Some of my hon. Friends think four inspections too small, and others that it is too large a number. I believe myself that if my proposal as it stands were accepted, it would probably involve some addition to the staff of Inspectors. We are all aware, however, of the great importance of colliery inspection, and I think when we are dealing with a subject connected with the safety of life—and safety of life is regarded throughout the Bill as of primary consideration—we ought not to profess that we are affording security, while, at the same time, we have a staff of Inspectors so small as to be inefficient.

Amendment proposed,

In page 21, line 21, after "shall," insert (a) "thoroughly inspect every colliery within his district at least four times every year; and (b)."
(*Mr. Donald Crawford.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

COLONEL BLUNDELL (Lancashire, S.W., Ince): I think there ought, undoubtedly, to be an annual inspection of collieries in addition to the occasional visit, in order that the Inspectors may have a thorough grasp of all that goes on in their districts. The State ought to be made aware of any avoidable waste or loss of coal which takes place.

SIR JOSEPH PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): If you say that the Inspector is to visit every colliery four times a-year, as the necessity for inspection varies in the case of some collieries as compared with others, then those collieries which require a very small amount of inspection may get double what they need, and those which require more than the Amendment gives them will be left with less than they ought to have, because the Inspector would say very justly, I have been to the colliery four times as the Act requires. We should remember that the great object is to have frequent inspection of dangerous mines. I doubt very much that the Amendment would do what is desired in this respect, although I have no objection to it if it meets with the approval of the Committee. There will, of course, have to be an increase of the staff of Inspectors if all collieries are to be inspected four times a-year.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I confess that I do not think it would be wise to take the responsibility off the owners of mines, which I think would be one result of this Amendment. It is quite true that it is the duty of the Inspector to criticize the operations of the manager or owner, and to make requisitions in case of need; but when you once take responsibility off the shoulders of the owners you increase the danger to the men. It is the duty of the Inspector to visit mines on invitation and complaint of the men, and inasmuch as it is felt that miners may shrink from making complaint it is provided that he may attend to anonymous applications. These are called casual inspections, and the system seems to me a better one than that of periodical inspection to take place at certain times. For these reasons I do not think it desirable the Amendment of the hon. and learned Member should be adopted.

MR. MASON (Lanark, Mid): I agree very much with the right hon. Gentleman that a hard-and-fast line would not be desirable in dealing with this matter of inspection. But I desire to see a proper inspection of mines in Lanarkshire, as well as elsewhere. I know, from having been in contact with the men in that district, that the mines there are not by any means thoroughly inspected. So impressed am I with the necessity of having the mines of my own district inspected, that I believe there are some mines there which it would not be too much to cause to be inspected once a month, although there may be some mines where inspection is not necessary more than once a-year. In that part of Scotland the staff of Inspectors is by no means adequate to the proper inspection of the mines. Although I do not want this Amendment now before the Committee to be pressed to a Division, I desire to impress on the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary the absolute necessity there is for something being done to ensure frequent inspection in Lanarkshire.

MR. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck): Without pledging myself to the Amendment in its present form I must say that I have very considerable sympathy with the object which the hon. and learned Member for North-East Lanark has in view—namely, that of frequent inspection of mines. This is a matter which it has been sought to impress on various Home Secretaries. We are fully aware that with the present staff of Inspectors it is almost impossible to increase the amount of inspection, or to have anything like a thorough and complete system. Now, as soon as this question of increasing the staff of Inspectors is raised we are always met by the Home Secretary for the time being with the statement that there are difficulties in the way at the Treasury. But when the First Lord of the Admiralty says he wants money for ammunitions of war the case is very different, and this House immediately votes large sums of money. There is no difficulty about getting money for destructive purposes, but when we ask for funds for the purpose of protecting the lives of our people, we are at once met with the answer that huge difficulties stand in the way. I do not know that it is desirable that mines should be inspected once a quarter, and I will not pledge myself to that principle, but I can inform the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary that the inspection we have now is a mere farce, and unless the staff of inspection is very considerably increased, I am afraid the work will continue to be very ineffectually performed. As a local Inspector I have had experience of this work, and I can say that in a very ordinary colliery it has taken my colleague and myself four days to go over all the parts of the mine. If the Inspector is only to get into conversation with the manager, and then descend to the bottom of the shaft—if that is to be considered inspection, then I can tell the Committee that we should be better without any inspection at all. I admit that periodical inspection may, to some extent, remove responsibility from the manager and owner. But I would point out to hon. Members that even when the manager knows that the Inspector is coming everything in the mine, as far as can be, is put into fair and proper order; and when local Inspectors are appointed we find the pits are attended to periodically. There is, in this way, a check upon the managers, and they endeavour to keep all the roadways and fireways clean. But if we are to have effectual inspection I say we must be prepared considerably to increase the staff of Inspectors, and although it will involve a considerable amount of expenditure we had better incur that expenditure in our endeavours to protect life, than spend so much on huge armaments, purely for destructive purposes. I support this Amendment, which provides for increased inspection, without pledging myself to the exact wording, and I was glad to hear the hon. and learned Member for North-East Lanark say that he was not bound absolutely to the number of inspections which the Amendment provides for. I hope the Home Secretary will be able to accept the principle of the Amendment, which is in the direction of securing an increased amount of inspection.

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): I hope it will not go forth that owners look upon what the hon. Member has described as a substantial inspection. Colliery proprietors have no objection to the proper inspection of their mines, although they do not want the management of them taken out of their own hands. I believe that inspection ought not to be carried beyond a fair limit, and certainly not to the extent of reducing the responsibility of the manager. For my part, I do not see that there is any necessity for the Amendment which the hon. and learned Member for North-East Lanark proposes, and I venture to hope it will not be pressed.

MR. DONALD CRAWFORD: In moving this Amendment I stated that I was not bound to the number of inspections, and I am quite prepared to substitute the word "twice" for "four times," if the right hon. Gentleman is willing to accept the Amendment in that form. I desire to protest against the view of the right hon. Gentleman that this is a question of the State accepting the whole responsibility for the good management of the mine, as against its being left to those whose duty and interest it is to take care that the mine is properly conducted. The question is not that, but whether we are to have a real inspection or a nominal and inefficient inspection. I allege that the inspection at present supplied is inefficient and illusory. Why should we pay for an inspection that is not effective? If the whole responsibility is to be taken by private persons and not by the State, then let us do away with inspection altogether. I am quite ready to press this Amendment to a Division if I receive the support of hon. Members on this side.

MR. HOZIER (Lanarkshire, S.): In support of the view taken by the hon. and learned Gentleman who has moved this Amendment (Mr. Donald Crawford) I wish to express my strong opinion that there ought to be a large increase in the number of Inspectors.

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES (Durham, N.W.): I am of opinion that the proposal of the hon. and learned Member for North-East Lanark (Mr. Donald Crawford) is absolutely impracticable. If all the mines in Durham are to be inspected four times a-year you will have to increase the number of Inspectors to an enormous extent. Of course it would be an advantage to increase the number of Inspectors, and I think the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary might give us an assurance to that effect, and then I think my hon. and learned Friend would do well to withdraw his Amendment.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton): I think we make a great mistake when we attempt to lay down hard-and-fast lines in matters of this kind. Under the clauses of this Bill the Home Secretary has to assign to these Inspectors their duties. Parliament has invested him with ample powers in this respect. I say, if the management of the mine is carried on improperly, let proper representation be made to the Home Secretary, and then, if the Home Secretary refuses to answer the application, he is responsible to this House. I think the position is a perfectly clear one. Let the Inspector have all the powers he ought to possess, throw on the manager and owner all the responsibility they ought to bear, in case of need apply to the Home Secretary, and, if they do not do their duty, let the matter be brought before Parliament.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): The worst of the wording of this Act is, that it is the same as in the Act of 1872. This responsibility has been thrown on the Home Secretary for 15 years, and with what effect? Why, the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary admits that the staff of Inspectors is inadequate, and yet he refuses to increase that staff, because such increase would involve an application to the Treasury. If that is the state of things, it is obviously necessary that the Home Secretary should be strengthened by this House. It is admitted that the inspection is imperfect. I have a letter saying that within the radius of two miles there are 35 pits, and the writer has known as much as two days to be spent on one of them; and he says that each Inspector has three or four pits under supervision. It is perfectly impossible for these Inspectors to inspect the pits which are now in operation, and therefore you must have a considerable increase of the existing staff. You do not want to increase your first-class Inspectors; what is required is a considerable increase of the practical working Inspectors, men who know exactly the points to look at, and who will carry out their work with an amount of shrewdness which your first-class Inspectors do not possess. The increase of staff will involve outlay to a certain extent, but not very much. The increase on one item in the Admiralty Vote for testing a gun would be more than enough to pay twice over for what we ask you to secure in the interest of the mining population of the country. It does seem a monstrous thing that £40,000 or £50,000 can be voted for the trials of a new gun or the armour-plating of a ship, while the Home Secretary, with all the responsibility that is cast upon him, cannot apply to the Chancellor of the Exchequer for £20,000 for the proper inspection of mines.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I think that an Amendment of this kind has been brought forward owing to the general feeling which exists among miners that inspection is, to a great extent, very inefficient. I have had a great deal of talk with miners in Cornwall and in other parts of the country, and I can give numerous instances of men who have been working 10 or 15 years in mines, and who have never seen an Inspector in any part of the mine, and are perfectly certain that no Inspector has ever been there. It is one of the demands of the miners of the county of Cornwall that there should be more rapid and more efficient inspection of the mines. Many of the men complain with justice, I think, that the Inspectors only come on the scene after some very bad accident has taken place, and then they come in company with the managers and others who are well primed as to what they ought to look at; and in that way the inspection is rendered worthless. As the number of mines increase the number of Inspectors and Assistant Inspectors becomes less sufficient. You must be prepared to go on increasing the number, and this adds point to the remark I made a little time back as to the necessity of appointing working men as Inspectors. You should appoint working men as Assistant Inspectors, and these you can get from among a class of men who would do their work well for a comparatively small salary, say, £200 a-year, whereas, I believe, the Government Inspectors at present get £600 or £700 a-year. I do not say that there ought to be a hard-and-fast rule, that each colliery should be inspected four times a-year, because such a rule would not necessarily work well; but, it is absolutely necessary that we should take our stand upon the ground that inspection should be more regular, more frequent, and more efficient than it is at the present time.

MR. PICKARD (York, W.R., Normanton): There are in my district 170 mines for each Inspector to examine, and I know, from the conversation I have had with the Chief Inspector, that the work or correspondence alone is quite sufficient to keep him employed; indeed, I may say that he is almost overworked in that respect. We consider that we have not sufficient inspection, and my suggestion is that seven Sub-inspectors should be appointed to aid the Chief Inspector in his work, and that I believe would give us very much better inspection. I trust the right hon. Gentleman will be able to say that he will take some steps to bring about that most desirable result.

MR. F. S. POWELL (Wigan): It appears to me that it would be far better that we should avoid in this Bill any severe regulations as to the number of inspections. What we have to consider is how far and in what manner pressure should be applied to the Government in order to induce them to increase the number of Inspectors, because it seems to me to be the common feeling that the inspection staff should be increased. I think after the remark made by the hon. Gentleman who preceded me, that a hard-and-fast line might be less in favour with the miners than some other action on the part of the Government; but, admitting that increased inspection is desirable, I think the Bill should be elastic and not rigid.

MR. BARNES (Derbyshire, Chesterfield): I know a case of an Inspector in the Midland District, a considerable portion of whose time is occupied in correspondence. It is a monstrous thing that a man whose duties are essentially of a practical and most responsible character should have his time taken up in this way. I am of opinion that every first-class Inspector should have a clerk to look after his correspondence. That would undoubtedly afford him great assistance, and enable him to get through his work more effectually than he can under the present arrangements.

MR. JOICEY (Durham, Chester-le-Street): There is no doubt that, since 1882, the number of mines has greatly increased; and not only that, but they have become larger and more dangerous to work. At that time we were working the upper seams, and so much ventilation was not necessary; but having got now into the lower seams, the mines stand in need of a much greater amount of attention, and it is impossible that the present staff of Inspectors can do the work required of them in consequence. I shall, therefore, cordially support the Amendment of the hon. and learned Member for North-East Lanark (Mr. Donald Crawford). The frequent inspection of mines appears to me desirable, because, without interfering with the management of the mines, they give confidence to those who are employed in them.

MR. MASON: I rise to suggest that the Committee should not be content with one inspection a-year; and, rather than admit that into the Bill, I would prefer to leave out altogether any reference to inspection. I would suggest that these words should be inserted—

> "Every Inspector of a district under this Act shall thoroughly inspect the collieries and mines in that district, and make an annual Report of his proceedings during the year to the Home Secretary, which Report shall be laid before Parliament."

I think that could not be said to tie the Inspectors down to a hard-and-fast line.

MR. DONALD CRAWFORD: If my interpretation of my hon. Friend's Amendment is correct—that is to say, that there should not be less than one inspection a-year—I should be quite willing to accept it. I am sorry to have to take up the time of the Committee so often; but I remind hon. Members that we have as yet received no assurance from the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary of any intention to increase the number of Inspectors; and, with all due regard to economy, I take the Committee to witness that we are all agreed that an increase is absolutely necessary.

MR. MATTHEWS: I can assure the hon. and learned Member for North-East Lanark that I fully recognize the importance of this question. I will undertake that some additional strength is supplied where it is found that the inspecting staff is insufficient. It is an idea which I have had for some time that a class of Inspectors might be appointed—working men who would not shrink from going into the inmost recesses of the mine. I think that by this plan we might get at points which could not be reached by the higher class of Inspectors. There are, no doubt, some difficulties in the way; but those, I think, may be overcome. The class of men I have in my mind are such as would be content with smaller salaries than the present Inspectors. I may mention, however, that on consulting the Inspectors, and asking them whether they want additional inspection, their answer is always "No." I must say that the hon. Member for East Donegal (Mr. Arthur O'Connor), quite unintentionally, of course, misrepresented the speech I made last Saturday. All that I said was that if inspection was to be carried out in the manner which the hon. Member wanted, there would be required five or 10 times the number of Inspectors we have at present. I think that the suggestion of the hon. Member opposite, who has spoken with such admirable good sense, is deserving of every consideration; and I repeat that whereever inspection is found to be insufficient everything shall be done, as far as I am able, to make it efficient.

Mr. BURT (Morpeth): I should like the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary to understand that this complaint with regard to insufficiency of inspection is not confined to the North of Scotland alone, but is general. More than once I have had occasion to represent the inadequacy of inspection before the House of Commons, and it is only fair to admit that during the last few years a considerable increase has been made to the number of Inspectors and Sub-Inspectors; in fact, it has been nearly doubled. But I may mention to the right hon. Gentleman that even 10 or 12 years ago, when Inspectors were asked, they said, as they say now, that their number was sufficient to do all the inspection that was necessary. No doubt these gentlemen have a voracious appetite for work, and no doubt they do their work admirably; but everyone who knows what mining inspection means, and knows how many mines there are to inspect, will be aware that there are some mines which require five or 10 days for their inspection, and that it is physically impossible to carry out such an Amendment as that which is now before the Committee with the present number of Inspectors. I confess that I have some disinclination to advocate a hard-and-fast rule with regard to inspection, even to make it once a-year, because I fear that in such a case the impression would be that once a-year would be quite sufficient. Now, there are mines which would require several inspections in the course of a year, and there are others which may be very well left until the attention of the Inspector is called to them. A great deal has been done by authorizing even anonymous letters to be attended to by the Inspectors, and I have no doubt that from that arrangement considerable improvement has resulted. But I desire thoroughly to endorse the remarks that have been made with regard to the large amount of clerical work that has to be done by the Inspectors, and I think that clerks should be assigned to them for the purpose of relieving them from that portion of the work. I think the right hon. Gentleman, in his later remarks, has rather weakened the assurance he has already given; but we have the general assurance that the Home Secretary will increase the number of Inspectors, and in my opinion, therefore, my hon. and learned Friend would do well to be satisfied with the good that has resulted from his moving the Amendment, and not insist on periodical inspection.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: It is clear, I think, that in reference to this matter a hard-and-fast line is undesirable. The circumstances of the different districts are so varying and characters of the mines so different that you may have in one district a necessity for very frequent inspection and in an adjoining district scarcely any necessity at all for it. You may have, also, in the same district, and even in the same colliery, mines which are fiery and others which are not. Now, fiery mines require a large amount of inspection, and there are, on the other hand, mines which require to be inspected only once a-year. The question of management and the question of inspection are the two most important points in the Bill. When last year I brought in a Coal Mines Regulation Act I introduced a clause which provided for inspection once a-month. Once a-month may seem to allow a very short interval to take place between the inspections; but in connection with that proposal, I received a very large number of communications from England and Scotland, in which this was declared to be not only feasible, but of the first consequence that it should be carried out. I should be sorry if the hon. and learned Member for North-East Lanark (Mr. Donald Crawford) were content with having raised a discussion on this point only. I think, in the interest of the mining population, he ought to secure some definite promise from the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary, in order that we may be able to tell the people whom we represent that something practical has been done in this matter. The right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary says where it is shown that further inspection or increase of staff is necessary, that there he will undertake to have an increased staff. The view of the Inspectors is that they are adequate to the requirements of the case; but the view of those who work in the mines is quite different, and those are the men who feel that at any time their lives may be scarcely worth a day's purchase. A certain barometric pressure will indicate that there is an outbreak of gas which at any moment may be fatal; the danger from this source is unmistakable, and inspection of the mine is frequently one of the best preservatives of life that we can resort to. However obstructive we may appear to be in this matter, it is of the utmost importance that we should persist until we get a definite promise from the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary on this subject.

MR. W. ABRAHAM (Glamorgan, Rhondda): I have certainly no desire to prolong this discussion; but I do desire that the right hon. Gentleman will give us some further assurance that he will make provision for a more efficient inspection of mines throughout the country. To say that he will have regard to particular districts is not sufficient. I am not of the number of those who think it necessary to lay down a hard-and-fast line, and I do not think that would be necessary for the purpose of securing the object we have in view. From my own experience, I have nothing to allege against the Inspectors in our district. I know of no body of men who work harder than the Mining Inspectors in that district; and it is unreasonable to expect them, or any class of men, to do more than they are able to perform. I find by the last Return that there are 350 mines in South Wales; and that is a reduction on the number there were a few years ago. I am speaking of the four counties of Glamorganshire, Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, and Monmouthshire; and I say that owing to the size of the collieries and the distances between them, it is impossible to make an inspection of these collieries, which, on the average, will allow less than two days for each inspection. There are 365 days in the year, and if you deduct from that number Sundays, half-holidays, and days on which the Inspectors have to attend examinations, Courts of Summary Jurisdiction, inquests, and so forth, the number of working days is reduced to 200, and by a little further calculation the Committee will see that throughout this dangerous district, with the present staff of Inspectors, inspection cannot be made even once in 12 months. The Inspectors are a body of men against whom I have nothing to say; they are most hard-working; but their present number does not admit of their achieving the impossible, or even doing justice to the important district in which they are engaged.

MR. BROADHURST (Nottingham, W.): I feel that we have made great progress this evening with regard to the increase of inspection. This subject is of such importance that I think it would be well not to press the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary to make any definite statement to-night as to the extent of the increase to be made. My reason for that is that he might, perhaps, under pressure, make it less than it would be if he were left to consider the question, and to consult his Colleagues in a matter of so much importance. I think it will be discovered by the right hon. Gentleman, on investigation and consultation with his Colleagues and Friends, that the increase of expenditure which would be involved in this case would meet with general approval throughout the country; especially when it is considered that the lives of more men than there are in the Army and Navy are at stake. What we want is that the right hon. Gentleman should consider the increase of inspection with reference not to any particular locality, but to the country as a whole. That is the chief object in view, and I think it would be better if the right hon. Gentleman would make a statement at a later stage of the Bill, which would allow him ample time to consult his Colleagues. This, I think, would greatly facilitate progress with the remaining parts of the Bill which remain to be considered, and which are secondary to that of the great question of inspection.

MR. MATTHEWS: I can assure the Committee that I do not wish to confine the increase that may be found necessary to any particular part of the country. I certainly meant to convey that in all those districts where inspection was deficient I would do my utmost to secure better inspection.

Mr. DONALD CRAWFORD: After the assurance of the right hon. Gentleman, and the expression of opinion which has come from my hon. Friends, I ask leave to withdraw my Amendment. But I wish to say that the right hon. Gentleman might have shortened this discussion if he had not made such particular reference to Lanarkshire. The right hon. Gentleman will find that England, Wales, and Scotland intend to hold together on this matter. This is not the time to endeavour to isolate any portion of the Kingdom, so far as this question is concerned; and I beg him to understand that my hon. Friends and myself are not bound by the result of the hole-and-corner meetings to which neither Scotch Members nor others were invited. I will now ask leave to withdraw my Amendment.

Mr. CONYBEARE: I wish to point out to the right hon. Gentleman that this question of inspection is one of general application to the whole country, and applies not only to collieries, but to the particular class of mining which goes on in that part of the country which I have the honour to represent. I suggest that the right hon. Gentleman should consult with the Parliamentary Representatives of each district, and that he should take powers for the appointment of such additional Inspectors as may be necessary.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Mr. ROWNTREE (Scarborough), in moving to insert, after "Parliament," the words—

"Together with the aggregate results of the Returns under Sub-section 3, Section 34, on or before the first of May in each year,"

said, his object was to provide that the annual Reports of the Inspectors should be presented to Parliament by a definite date.

Amendment proposed,

In page 21, line 24, after "Parliament," add "together with the aggregate results of the Returns under Sub-section (3), Section 34, on or before the 1st day of May in each year."—(*Mr. Rowntree.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Stuart-Wortley) (Sheffield, Hallam): The Reports of the Inspectors, I am informed, are not actually made until the month of April, and a certain time must be allowed for getting proofs corrected, and passing the Reports through the Press. I will undertake that the utmost endeavour shall be made to get the Reports out as early as possible. I do not propose to make the Reports a separate Parliamentary Paper; but I shall be happy to send abstracts to those who wish to have them.

Mr. BROADHURST: I would point out that there is considerable delay, not only with reference to these Reports, but to many other similar documents. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will make a statement on that subject also.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Clause *agreed to.*

Clause 45 (Special Reports of Inspectors).

Amendment proposed, in page 21, line 26, after the word "person," to insert the words "or special examination of a mine."—(*Mr. Pickard.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): There is some want of clearness in the Amendment which the hon. Member proposes; and I suggest that it should be left over to the Report stage. I am not quite sure what the hon. Member means by "separate examination." I do not recognize the phrase in this connection.

Mr. PICKARD (York, W.R., Normanton): I would point out that after explosion there is very often an accumulation of gas in a mine. Our workmen have sometimes complained four or five times in a week, and the Inspectors have gone in and made an examination. I want these examinations to be reported in the same sense as other examinations.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): Where it appears on behalf of the men an application is made for special examination of a mine, and that examination takes place, their desire for a Report of the Inspector who makes the special examination should be complied with, and the Report rendered in precisely the same way as any other Report that is made.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): Probably the hon. Gentleman will move the Amendment on Report. He must see that the object he desires to obtain would not be obtained by the Amendment he proposes, and on Report there will be every desire to meet the hon. Member.

MR. PICKARD: I only wish to say it was suggested to me that this was the proper place in which to put these words; but I will accept the suggestion made by the right hon. Gentleman.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Clause *agreed to.*

Clause 46 (Formal investigation when directed by Secretary of State).

MR. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith): I am not sure that the Amendment of which I have given Notice is exactly necessary, as I assume in any case where special investigation is made it would not be made by the Inspector of the mine; but in order to obtain the views of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State on this question I will formally move the Amendment.

Amendment proposed, in page 21, line 34, after the word "person," to insert the words "not being an Inspector under this Act."—(*Mr. James William Lowther.*)

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): The existing law compels us to appoint an Inspector to hold these inquiries, and I am bound to say that in 19 cases out of 20 the Inspector is the proper person to do so. The Act of 1886—it is only the legislation of last year, the 49th & 50th of the Queen, Section 40—says the Secretary of State may appoint the Inspector to make the inquiry. It did occur to me it should not be the Inspector, and I left the Secretary of State free to choose any competent person to hold the inquiry, the reason being in case the Inspector might be implicated.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): Would the Assistant Inspectors be competent to hold the inquiry?

MR. MATTHEWS: Certainly, if competent; it says "any competent person," and we should accept the most experienced person available.

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): There is nothing in the Bill to make it necessary to appoint the Inspector. There may be cases in which it would be right that the Inspector should make the inquiry, and I do not think the Amendment is necessary.

MR. J. W. LOWTHER: I will not press the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. PICKARD: I beg now to move the omission of the words "unless otherwise directed by the Secretary of State."

Amendment proposed, in page 21, Sub-section 2, lines 39 and 40, to leave out the words "unless otherwise directed by the Secretary of State."—(*Mr. Pickard.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

MR. MATTHEWS: I only adopted the words of the Act of last year, and I imagine that the reason why those words were there inserted was that probably where criminal consequences and a criminal trial might result from the circumstances of the explosion or accident, it would be very undesirable to prejudice that criminal trial beforehand by taking evidence in an open investigation of this sort which would be beyond private control. I imagine that is the reason why the words were put in. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) will be able to assist me in this, as he was a party to it, it being contained in his draft Bill.

MR. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.): If my memory does not fail me, the words were in the Act of last year (Lord Cross's), and I made no change in the Bill I introduced.

MR. MATTHEWS (who was indistinctly heard) was understood to say: It would be extremely awkward if the words were struck out, as it would prevent such an investigation taking place in case of a criminal charge, because, if there was to be a criminal charge, the public investigation would have to be postponed until after the trial of the charge.

MR. CHILDERS: I do not attach much value to the words, as there would be a Coroner's inquest.

MR. TOMLINSON: That would be a very exceptional case.

MR. CHILDERS: I should not have expressed any opinion but for the direct appeal of the right hon. Gentleman. I am bound to say I do not feel competent to advise the Committee, having given a very cursory attention to the subject last year; but if the right hon. Gentleman says that with a view to criminal proceedings the words ought to be inserted in order to give him a discretion, I will make no objection.

Mr. MATTHEWS: It would be extremely awkward not to have this discretion, as otherwise it might prejudice any subsequent inquiry. For instance, if any Secretary of State saw that a charge of manslaughter might be brought, it would not be advisable to hold the inquiry until the charge of manslaughter was disposed of, otherwise it might very much prejudice a man who was going to be tried in connection with any accident.

Mr. CHILDERS: I am bound to say I think there is that objection to it.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: The words may appear to be very unimportant; but if anyone will look at the character of the Court established by this section he will see it is a very serious matter to allow the Court, under any circumstances, secret jurisdiction. This Court is to have, for the purpose of investigation, all the powers of the Court of Summary Jurisdiction; it is to have the power to enter and inspect places and buildings; it is to have the power to summon persons and to examine them on oath; it is to have power to require any person examined to make a declaration; it is to have power to compel the production of books and documents, and so forth; in point of fact, this Court has all the powers conferred in the case of other Courts, including the power of secrecy. Altogether, you are setting up a tribunal of an altogether abnormal and exceptional character if you allow it to be conducted under the veil of secrecy. Before the Committee assents to anything of the kind I think it does require serious consideration, because in England we have not got coercion. It is all very well to do this in Ireland, where we have coercion; but where you are inquiring into the cause of an explosion in Durham, or South Wales, or South Staffordshire, I do not see what earthly object there is in secrecy, and you had far better do without it.

Mr. A. J. WILLIAMS (Glamorgan, S.): I agree with the hon. Gentleman the Member for East Donegal (Mr. Arthur O'Connor); and I think that in all the inquiries you make you should have them public. It is of the greatest importance, when an explosion occurs, that the whole country should be allowed to know all that takes place in the inquiry which follows.

Mr. TOMLINSON (who was indistinctly heard) was understood to say: No Secretary of State would direct a secret inquiry unless it was absolutely necessary, and not to have this power might prevent the investigation being held.

Mr. BURT (Morpeth): I did not hear all that fell from the hon. and learned Gentleman who has just spoken or his Predecessor; neither did I hear what fell from the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary nor the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh; but I understood the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary to disavow the authorship of this particular clause; and I understood the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh not to approve of it himself. Under these circumstances, and as the provision is entirely new——

Mr. MATTHEWS: No; it is in the existing law.

Mr. BURT: I have not noticed it in the existing Act of Parliament; and I think, without very much stronger reasons than have yet been given, it would not be advisable to retain these words. As I am strongly opposed to secret inquiries of any sort I shall support the Amendment of my hon. Friend.

Sir JOSEPH PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): It certainly seems to me these words would be better left out, unless there is something that I do not understand with regard to the Criminal Law. The great advantage of omitting these words would be that the cause of an accident would be known, and this might result in similar accidents in the future being prevented. There is also a general feeling that all these inquiries in Court should be open, as it is a great means of bringing forward public reprobation of anything like carelessness, which operates most beneficially; and, at the same time, all of us have a great prejudice in favour of open inquiry, unless there was some very particular reason against it on account of someone being charged under the Act. I, for one, am very much in favour of these inquiries being perfectly open.

MR. CHILDERS: My hon. Friend the Member for Morpeth (Mr. Burt) asks me about this clause. I find that my memory is quite correct. This clause was introduced into Lord Cross's Act of last year; and the words in this clause are copied exactly from that clause. I was not responsible for the Act of last year; nor was my Predecessor the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt). There was no lengthened discussion on this clause, though it was considered; but I only remember so much, that the advantage of this form of preliminary inquiry was approved, both by those who represent the miners and those who represent the owners, and I think that we have not had sufficient experience to warrant us in altering the provision. I am inclined to believe, speaking from knowledge of one case that took place last year—I cannot remember its name—that it would be to the advantage of the public that the Secretary of State should have power to institute this inquiry, which is the Secretary of State's inquiry, for his own purposes, to enable him to consider what steps he should take, and that in certain cases he should have the power of instituting this inquiry secretly, so that he may consider, upon the receipt of the Report of the inquiry, what further steps he should take; and the ends of justice may be defeated if it is put out of his power to order, in certain cases, that this inquiry should be taken with closed doors. As the Act was only passed last year, I could not, under the circumstances, advise the House to repeal an Act the experience of which is so short.

MR. MATTHEWS: May I add that Coroners sometimes close their doors.

MR. P. STANHOPE (Wednesbury): With all respect to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) who has just spoken, I think the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary would not be well advised to take any additional powers. I do not know that the right hon. Gentleman has properly carried out all the powers which he already possesses with regard to the interference with the operations of law, and I certainly think it is most undesirable that he should have by this Act the invidious power of ordering a secret investigation. I hope the Committee will not sanction such a principle, and will accept the Amendment.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I should have thought the history of the Star Chamber in England would have been quite sufficient to knock on the head any inquiry of this sort that is proposed. With all due respect to the greater experience of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) the question is whether this is a bad and an unconstitutional principle, and not whether it has worked well in the few months it has been in existence, and which bears upon it the stamp of the other House. I maintain that we ought to express our opinion with regard to it, even to the point of a Division. If we consider this is an essentially bad principle it ought not to find its way into an Act of Parliament. The reference the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary made just now to the Coroner was a very unfortunate one, for the right hon. Gentleman must know that great dissatisfaction has recently been expressed in that very case of a Coroner closing his Court to the public. It is altogether foreign to the common sense and feeling of the public in this country, and if for no other reason I should strongly oppose the introduction of these words, because wherever the right hon. Gentleman or any other Secretary who was at the Home Office should put the power into force it would be certain to raise so much disapprobation and suspicion in the minds of the public generally, that more injury would be done by that very fact than by any amount of miscarriage of justice which might possibly result from this power being taken away. Talking about miscarriage of justice, I believe that would result from this power being put into the hands of the Secretary of State, and being used by him. It is most impolitic that any individual should have power to conduct such a judicial inquiry, and I would remind my hon. Friends behind me that upon a similar provision to this in the earlier portion of this very Bill the Government were defeated, and that not many weeks ago. It was Section 13, in which were the words "unless the mine is excepted by order of the Secretary of State," and those words were struck out, and far more ought these words to be struck out. I would only add that one of the greatest jurists of this country, or in any other, Jeremy Bentham, gave utterance to the expression that "publicity is the soul of justice."

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: Only one argument has been used in favour of the retention of these words, and that is that they were in Lord Cross's Act. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh did not tell the Committee the date upon which it was passed; but—I am speaking from recollection—it was one of the very last Acts passed into law last Session. I remember that the Bill of Sir Richard Cross was introduced at the same time as the one I introduced, and, on the appeal of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh, I kept my Bill back in order that the House might see what were to be the provisions embodied in the Bill of the Government, and both Sir Richard Cross's Bill and my own were kept on the Orders of the House. I find that the Government measure when it was introduced—and it is almost a verbatim copy of the one we are now considering—contained this clause. But Sir Richard Cross's Bill that contained this clause was passed at the fag-end of the Session, when there was no time to discuss anything adequately. It was accepted as something to be passed into law, not because it was in the best possible shape or contained all the provisions anyone would wish, but because Sir Richard Cross had set his heart very much on something being passed, and out of compliment to him it was allowed to pass.

MR. W. ABRAHAM (Glamorgan, Rhondda): I desire to oppose these words remaining in the Act, because they give a power to the Secretary of State that is given to no one else. I think they might as well be placed in his hands as in the hands of anyone else, if they are to be given, and I do not think these personalities are going to help our cause. Still I hope they will be struck out, because the principle is a bad one, and if they are left in I am sure they will produce considerable irritation in the minds of the men, and defeat the object of this most important clause. Therefore I hope the right hon. Gentleman will see his way to have them struck out.

MR. LLEWELLYN (Somerset, N.): I hope these words will be struck out, as I think that all these inquiries should be made public. If the Court assembles, and the evidence is taken privately, some garbled and inaccurate report would be certain to appear, and it would, therefore, be far better that the Court should be held publicly, rather than misleading accounts should be given.

Question put.

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 113; Noes 85: Majority 28.—(Div. List, No. 377.) [12.30 A.M.]

Amendment proposed,

In page 22, after line 19, to insert the following sub-section:—"(*e.*) The owner, agent, manager, or under manager of a mine in which any explosion or accident has occurred, or any person injured, or the relatives of any person killed by any such explosion or accident, shall be at liberty to attend the Court in person or by counsel or solicitor, and to cross-examine any witness, and may themselves give evidence as witnesses, or call witnesses to give evidence."—(*Mr. Tomlinson.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. MATTHEWS: I hope my hon. and learned Friend will not press this Amendment. These inquiries are in the nature of a Commission of Inquiry. When the Royal Commission sat to make inquiries into the Belfast riots, with a view to inform the mind of the Secretary of State as to what should be done, Mr. Justice Day laid it down that although he was delighted to have the assistance of counsel representing various interests, they had no right to appear or to force on any examination which the Commissioners did not think conducive to the proper conduct of the inquiry. If the owner of a mine, or any person injured, or a relative of any person killed, has anything important to say, they will, no doubt, be allowed to say it, either by themselves or by counsel; but if you give people a right to appear by counsel you let in endless difficulties. It must be recollected that no one is charged on one of these inquiries. The inquiry is merely to inform the mind of the Secretary of State, and I think, therefore, that it is right to leave the conduct of the inquiry to the person who is appointed to undertake it.

Mr. TOMLINSON: I will not press the Amendment if the general feeling of the Committee is against it. This is a new procedure, and it is not easy at the outset to see what would be the best way to conduct it.

Mr. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck): If the hon. and learned Member for Preston (Mr. Tomlinson) would agree to a slight amendment of his Amendment we should have no difficulty in supporting it. If, after the word "injured" in his Amendment, he would agree to the addition of the words "or any of the workmen," as I hope he will do, we shall then be in a position to support him. I will, therefore, move to amend the Amendment by inserting in the second line, after the word "injured," the words "or any of the workmen."

Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment, in line 2, after word "injured," to insert the words "or any of the workmen."—(*Mr. Fenwick.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Sir JOSEPH PEASE: I think the words can hardly be properly inserted at the point in the Amendment suggested by the hon. Member.

Mr. FENWICK: In that case I would propose to insert my Amendment after the word "occurred" in the second line.

Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment, by inserting after the word "occurred," in the second line, the words "or any of the workmen."

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. ATHERLEY-JONES (Durham, N.W.): I must express my surprise at what has fallen from the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary. It appears to me that this Amendment is an absolutely indispensable Amendment to the proposition of the right hon. Gentleman.

The CHAIRMAN: Order, order! We must first dispose of the Amendment to the proposed Amendment before discussing the Amendment itself.

Mr. P. STANHOPE: I would suggest that the proposed Amendment would come in best after the words "under manager" in the first line, so as to make the sub-section read—"The owner, agent, manager, or under manager, or any of the workmen of a mine," &c.

Mr. GEDGE (Stockport): This is only a preliminary inquiry for the information of the Secretary of State. To give the workmen power——

The CHAIRMAN: Order, order! Will the hon. Member (Mr. Fenwick) withdraw his Amendment?

Mr. FENWICK assented, and intimated that he would afterwards propose to insert it at the point in the Amendment suggested by the hon. Member for Wednesbury (Mr. P. Stanhope).

Amendment to the proposed Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Mr. FENWICK then proposed to amend the proposed Amendment by inserting the words "or any of the workmen" after the words "under manager" in line 7.

Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment, in line 1, after the words "under manager," to insert the words "or any of the workmen."—(*Mr. Fenwick.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. TOMLINSON: Perhaps it would, after all, be better to leave the matter as it stands in the Bill. I, therefore, propose to withdraw the Amendment.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: The question is whether the workmen should be treated on an equal footing with the owners of a mine. The hon. and learned Member for Preston proposes that only the owners and others should have certain rights. Who are these "others?" The managers, under managers, agents of a mine, any persons injured, or the relatives of any persons killed. These persons are to be entitled to attend the Court in person, or by counsel or solicitor, and to give evidence. Well, if persons in a position of authority or persons actually injured or the relatives of those killed are thus to be entitled to appear before the Court either in person or by counsel, why should not workmen, other than those injured, have the same right or privilege? That is the whole question raised by the Amendment to the Amendment, and I cannot see how the hon. and learned Member for Preston can object to it.

MR. CONYBEARE: Without the addition of the proposed words the proposition of the hon. and learned Member for Preston is one-sided and we cannot consent to it. Now that you have given power to the Secretary of State to make this a private and secret inquiry, it is essential that this Amendment should be inserted.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Question put, as amended,

"That the words 'The owner, agent, manager, or under manager, or any of the workmen of a mine in which any explosion or accident has occurred, or any person injured, or the relatives of any person killed by any such explosion or accident, shall be at liberty to attend the Court in person, or by counsel or solicitor, and to cross-examine any witness, and may themselves give evidence as witnesses, or call witnesses to give evidence,' be there inserted."

The Committee *divided:*—Ayes 72; Noes 109: Majority 37.—(Div. List, No. 378.) [12.40. A.M.]

Amendment proposed,

In page 22, line 30, after "make" to insert—"And the Secretary of State shall, as soon as may be reasonably practicable after the receipt by him of such Report, cause a printed copy of the same to be made public, either by posting it in a conspicuous place on the premises of the mine, or by such other means as he may direct."—(*Mr. Llewellyn.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. STUART-WORTLEY) (Sheffield, Hallam): My hon. Friend will, I think, see that the object of this Amendment will be sufficiently provided for by Clause 47, which enacts that—

"The Secretary of State may cause any special Report of an Inspector or any Report of a Court under this part of this Act to be made public at such time and in such manner as he may think fit."

These Reports will, or, at all events, may be, very voluminous. When printed they sometimes run to 20 or 30 pages. It would, therefore, be difficult, if not impossible, to publish them in the manner proposed.

MR. LLEWELLYN: My object in proposing this Amendment is to prevent the publication of the Report of any inquiry under this section from being delayed for six months or more. Last year there was a case of an explosion in which persons were killed. This happened in June. I applied for a copy of the Report of the inquiry on that explosion in the January of the present year; but I did not get it until February or March. There was naturally a great desire that the Report of that inquiry should be made public as soon as possible, and there was great dissatisfaction at the delay which took place. My object is that a Report of one of these inquiries should be published as soon as possible, and my idea in proposing that it should be posted up in a conspicuous place on the premises of the mine was to enable the workmen to see it as soon as possible. But I admit that in some cases the Report may be too voluminous for this mode of publication; and, therefore, I have proposed that the Secretary of State should be authorized to have it published in any other manner he may direct.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: The object of this Amendment is, with all respect to the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for the Home Department (Mr. Stuart-Wortley), not attained by Clause 47. That clause provides that it shall be in the discretion of the Secretary of State to cause the Report to be published. But this Amendment would render it obligatory on the Secretary of State to publish the Report, though it would leave him a discretion as to the time when and the manner in which the Report should be issued. It says that the Report shall be published "as soon as may be reasonably practicable" after its receipt by him, and that it shall be published either by posting on the premises of the mine, "or by such other means as he may direct." Under Clause 47, on the other hand, it would, as I have already said, be discretionary with the Secretary of State to publish or to withhold the Report.

MR. MATTHEWS: I hope my hon. Friend will not press this Amendment. We have already provided that these inquiries may be held in private. Now, he proposes to make it compulsory that the result of the inquiry should be published as soon as may be reasonably practicable. Surely that is inconsistent with the previous provision. He may rely on it that in every case when a Report can be made public it will be made public. But to press this Amendment would be inconsistent with what the Committee has already determined.

MR. LLEWELLYN: My object was to prevent delay in the publication of these Reports. If I am assured that the Secretary of State will publish them I will withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Clause *agreed to.*

Clause 47 (Publication of Reports) *agreed to.*

Arbitration.

Clause 48 (Provisions as to arbitrations).

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I hope the Government will now agree to report Progress. We are about to commence a totally new subject. [*Cries of* "Go on!"] I think we ought to report Progress; but if my hon. Friends wish to go on I will give way to them.

MR. PICKARD (York, W.R., Normanton): I think it is time that we reported Progress, and I will give a reason for saying so. When we had our last meeting upstairs discussing this particular clause, the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary (Mr. Matthews) gave a promise that he would look through the clause and formulate a new one in its place. I would like to ask him whether or not he has given the clause his consideration, or whether he would like further time to do so?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I have no doubt we mean the same thing; but my recollection of what passed between the hon. Member and myself was this. He told me that the workmen frequently felt objection to this system of arbitration, inasmuch as it generally turned out that the arbitrators on both sides were connected with the mine-owning interest, and I told him I would consider whether I could substitute some other method of appointing the arbitrators. I have turned over various methods, and I do not know what I could suggest except a sole arbitrator appointed by the Board of Trade. After considering that, I have come to the conclusion that it would be less satisfactory to the persons concerned than that which is provided by the Bill—namely, an arbitrator appointed by each side. Perhaps the hon. Member for the Normanton Division of Yorkshire (Mr. Pickard) could suggest something better. I have thought of the Board of Trade, of the Quarter Sessions, of the magistrates, of the Petty Sessions; but I do not think that any one of these would be satisfactory, and therefore, upon the whole, although I think that these arbitration sections are very cumbrous, and although the inquiry by arbitration is very expensive and very dilatory, I do not believe anything better could be substituted.

MR. CONYBEARE: Mr. Courtney, I beg to move to report Progress, and I do so for this reason. There are 62 Orders upon the Paper. Some of them certainly are opposed, and I believe it is proposed to proceed with some of the others to-night. It is past 1 o'clock now, and if the Report of last Saturday's Committee of Supply is to come on, besides the Revenue Bill, we ought to be allowed some little time in which to discuss them. I mention Report of Supply, because the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House (Mr. W. H. Smith) will remember that last Saturday I waived my right to bring forward certain matters upon the Education Estimates on the distinct understanding that I should do so on Report.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. Conybeare.*)

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I am sure that the Committee are anxious to make progress with this Bill. A great number of those who have watched the progress of the Bill in Committee, and have taken part in the discussions, have shown a very great desire that the Bill should pass; but I must point out that this is the 15th of August, and that a special arrangement has been made to give up these two days—Monday and Tuesday—in order that we may, if possible, get through the Bill. Under the circumstances, I must appeal to hon. Members to sit a little longer, and to make as much progress as possible this evening. I propose that we should to-night finish Part I. of the Bill, and then when we come to Part II. report Progress. I am quite sure it is in the interest of this subject of coal mines' regulations, as well as in the interest of Parliament, that we should spend a little more time upon this Bill. With regard to the observations of the hon. Member for the Camborne Division of Cornwall, (Mr. Conybeare), I may inform him that I was in another part of the House when he made his remarks respecting the Education Estimates on Saturday. I may state that the Revenue Bill will not be taken this evening, and I hope we shall be allowed to go on.

Mr. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck): May I point out to the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of Treasury that we have already made very considerable progress. We have gone through 26 clauses. The next two clauses, 49 and 50, which finish the first part of the Bill, are two very important sections indeed.

Mr. W. H. SMITH: I admit that very considerable progress has been made; but I must ask the hon. Gentleman to bear in mind that, considering the number of Amendments on the Paper, there is very little hope of passing the Bill, unless we can get through more of them than we have done this evening. The time of the Session is such that I really must appeal to hon. Gentlemen who are interested in the matter to do the best to make progress.

Mr. JOICEY (Durham, Chester-le-Street): I must support the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury in his appeal, and I really do hope that we shall endeavour to make some more progress. I feel that unless we make considerable progress during to-night and to-morrow, there is very great danger of the abandonment of the Bill.

Question put, and *negatived.*

Mr. PICKARD: I beg to move the Amendment standing in my name—namely, in page 23, line 13, after "State," to add "and workmen." I do this on the ground that I think we should have one-third of the appointment of this arbitration. By the clause as it stands, the Court will be composed, first, of a colliery owner or a mining engineer; secondly, of a mining engineer; and, thirdly, of a mining engineer or colliery owner, to be appointed by the two as umpire. As the workmen are as interested in the safe working of the mine as the colliery owners, we consider that they should be directly represented in the Court. I wish to say that if the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary (Mr. Matthews) will promise to formulate and insert in the clause on the Report stage something which will meet our desires I have no wish now to press this Amendment.

Amendment proposed, in page 23, line 13, after the word "State," to add the words "and workmen."—(*Mr. Pickard.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added.

Mr. MATTHEWS: I have always felt myself that the Inspector, acting on behalf of the Secretary of State, is the champion of the workmen. [Mr. Pickard dissented.] The hon. Member for the Normanton Division of Yorkshire (Mr. Pickard) shakes his head. Will he just consider what are the occasions which give rise to this arbitration? They are occasions under Section 43. That section relates to cases in which an Inspector finds a mine, or any part thereof, or anything connected with it to be dangerous or defective so as, in his opinion, to tend to the bodily injury of any person. In cases of that kind, the Inspector is to give notice to the owner, and if the owner objects to remedy the defect or guard against the danger there is to be arbitration. On whose behalf then does the Inspector act? Does the hon. Member consider that the interests of the State alone are considered? Certainly not. The Inspector takes action in order to guard against the bodily injury of the workmen, and therefore he really acts as the champion of the workmen. The groundwork of the thing is this—the Inspector tells the owner that there is something defective in the mine, and the owner denies that this is the fact. The Inspector and the owner are, therefore, the parties to the dispute. Clearly, on the arbitration one of the parties must be the owner, and the only other proper party is the State. It would be intolerable to lay down as a matter of absolute right that any private persons—even the workmen on whose behalf the Inspector's action is taken—are entitled to be represented specially at the inquiry. As I have said before, the Inspector is the champion of the workmen. And let the hon. Member (Mr. Pickard) also consider this—to say that the Inspector acts on behalf of the workman is to make the Inspector the servant of the workmen, instead of the servant of the

State. Of course, the Inspector is the servant of the State and not of any particular class of men. It is only because danger or wrong is threatened to the workmen that the arbitration is to be held. That seems to be the obvious policy of the Act, and the obvious intention of the section.

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES (Durham, N.W.): I should like to point out to my hon. Friend (Mr. Pickard) that the effect of the Amendment would be that there would be three arbitrators appointed, because under one of the subsections of the clause each of the parties is empowered to appoint an arbitrator within 21 days of the result of the reference. That would give rise to a considerable amount of inconvenience, to say the least of it. I entirely agree with the sentiment of my hon. Friend's Amendment; but I hope that, under the circumstances, the proposal will be withdrawn.

MR. DONALD CRAWFORD (Lanark, N.E.): I entirely agree with what has been said by the hon. and learned Member for North-West Durham (Mr. Atherley-Jones), and I hope my hon. Friend the Member for Normanton (Mr. Pickard) will not proceed with his Amendment. My reason for expressing this hope is this. In each of the two cases in which arbitration is provided by the Bill—namely, under Sections 43 and 54—one party is the owner or manager, and the other party is the Secretary of State, or the Inspector as representing him. Now, there being only two possible parties, I do not see how any improvement could possibly be made in the interests of the workmen by this Amendment. An Amendment in favour of constituting the workmen a separate party might be relevant and very proper; but, as the Bill stands, I do not think that any advantage would be gained by the introduction of these words.

MR. PICKARD: I should be glad if the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary could carry out the idea he suggested himself. If we had the County Court Judges in the various districts constituted umpires in all these cases, and if in every event such matters should be settled by them, that would meet our view altogether. I hope, therefore, that the right hon. Gentleman will try to carry out that suggestion.

MR. BURT (Morpeth): I hope the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary will see his way to carry out the idea he expressed in the interview upstairs. I would point out to him that under this clause the arbitrators are limited to mining engineers. Now, we want a thoroughly impartial as well as a competent tribunal, and it is very desirable, I think, that we should have the present system altered. If that could be done, I think my hon. Friend might withdraw his Amendment.

MR. PICKARD: I beg to withdraw my Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES (Durham, N.W.): On behalf of my hon. Friend the Member for the Bishop Auckland Division of Durham (Mr. Paulton), I beg to move, in line 15, to leave out "twenty-one," and insert "seven." I feel sure that if the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary does not concur in the precise number of days specified by the Amendment he will agree to make some alteration. It is clear that the term of 21 days is not only too long, but is absolutely unprecedented in all matters of a cognate nature.

Amendment proposed, in page 23, line 15, to leave out the word "twenty-one," and insert the word "seven." —(*Mr. Atherley-Jones.*)

MR. MATTHEWS: Say 14 days.

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES: I withdraw my Amendment, then.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES: I beg to propose, in page 23, line 15, to leave out "twenty-one," and insert "fourteen."

Amendment proposed, in page 23, line 15, to leave out the words "twenty-one," and insert the word "fourteen." (*Mr. Atherley-Jones.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'twenty-one' stand part of the Clause."

MR. FENWICK: If we adopted that Amendment, it would be inconsistent with what was done in Clause 43, in which we have already agreed that the number of days should be reduced from 20 to 10.

MR. MATTHEWS: The two things relate to two totally different objects. Under Clause 43, a delay of 10 days is to be given to the owner to see whether he will comply with what the Inspector has said must be done. The present clause relates to the time which is to be allowed for the appointment of an arbitrator, if the owner decides that he will not comply with the Inspector's demands. The hon. Member knows very well that a mining engineer is very much engaged, and it may be difficult to find a man who will undertake the arbitration, and carry it out in a proper manner. Twenty-one days is too long to allow for the appointment of an arbitrator; but I do not think that 14 days is an unreasonable time.

MR. FENWICK: In that case it will be 34 days before proper machinery can be put in motion to remedy a defect in a mine. You give 10 days' notice in the first instance; then you give the owner other 10 days' notice respecting arbitration, and then you give other 14 days for the appointment of an arbitrator.

MR. MATTHEWS: No; the hon. Member is wrong. He only gets the second 10 days if there is no arbitration. If he intends to arbitrate, we give him 14 days to appoint an arbitrator.

Question put, and *negatived.*

Question, "That 'fourteen' be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES moved, in page 23, line 28, to leave out "twenty-one," and insert "fourteen."

Amendment proposed, in page 23, line 28, leave out the words "twenty-one," and insert the word "fourteen."—(*Mr. Atherley-Jones.*)

Question, "That the words 'twenty-one' stand part of the Clause," put, and *negatived.*

Question, "That the word 'fourteen' be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES: I beg to move, in line 34, to leave out the word "fourteen," and insert the word seven."

Amendment proposed, in page 23, line 34, leave out the word "fourteen," and insert the word "seven."—(*Mr. Atherley-Jones.*)

Question, "That the word 'fourteen' stand part of the Clause," put, and *negatived.*

Question, "That the word 'seven' be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES moved, in line 37, to leave out the word "fourteen," and insert the word "seven."

Amendment proposed, in page 23, line 37, leave out the word "fourteen." and insert the word "seven."—(*Mr. Atherley-Jones.*)

Question, "That the word 'fourteen' stand part of the Clause," put, and *negatived.*

Question, "That the word 'seven' be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

MR. GEDGE (Stockport): I regret that I have not known long enough beforehand what the exact proposal of the Government would be, in order that I might prepare an elaborate Amendment; but I will put it to the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary whether he is not willing so to alter the scheme of arbitration as to render it unnecessary to have always two trials? I am sure we are all agreed that it is desirable to be able to get decisions which will be binding at the least possible expense. It is proposed to have two arbitrators, and that if they differ the whole question shall be heard over again before the umpire, who is not to sit with them. All the expenses of the witnesses and the counsel will consequently have to be paid a second time over. I have had great experience during the last 30 years in connection with arbitrations, both as assessor and as acting for one of the disputants, and that experience has shown me that in 99 cases out of 100 the arbitrators on the different sides are more like advocates than arbitrators. They think that it is their duty to differ. The result is that the matter has to go before the umpire, who very often does not arrive at as sound a decision as he would otherwise do because he has no arbitrators sitting with him. Now, if the three men were to sit together, and the award of any two of them were to be taken as binding, great advantages would result. Very often a fair compromise would be arrived at, and, at all events, the thing would have to be done only once instead of twice. As I have said, I have not had time to prepare a detailed Amendment; but, in order to bring the matter formally before the Committee, I beg to propose that we should take part of two lines from Sub-section 10, and insert, after "referred to them," these words

—"The arbitrators shall appoint by writing under their hands an umpire."

Amendment proposed,

In page 23, lines 12 and 13, to leave out from "before" to "umpire," both inclusive, in order to insert the words "the arbitrators shall appoint by writing under their hands an umpire."—(*Mr. Gedge.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. MATTHEWS: As I understand the hon. Member's object, he desires that this Sub-section 10 shall come out. The words are contained in Sub-section 10. He would have an umpire appointed at once, and he should sit at once before the arbitrators enter on the matter. Well, I have no objection to that proceeding, but I took the clause as it stands, and left it as in the present law. My own strong objection to arbitration is that it is dilatory, expensive, and inconvenient, and the arbitrators view the matter as representatives of two antagonistic parties.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): If that is the right hon. Gentleman's view—and I do not agree with him—then he might as well do away with arbitrators, and appoint an umpire at once. But this will be a question of engineering mechanics as to proper precautions being taken in a mine, and two practical engineers meet, the one on behalf of the owners, and the other on behalf of the workmen and public, and there is no reason why they should not arrive at a mutual arrangement as to the wisest thing to be done. If on any point they hopelessly differ they call in an umpire, and if, in the first instance, they find themselves hopelessly at variance, they call in an umpire at once; but if you accept the Amendment you add to expense and delay, and complicate the whole matter.

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): Whatever is done, I hope the matter will not be left to the decision of an umpire sitting alone.

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES: I hope the Amendment will not be accepted. I cordially agree with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wolverhampton. It is an extremely common thing in trade disputes of all kinds to appoint two arbitrators who endeavour to set matters right, and on the rare occasions when they cannot come to an agreement they refer to an umpire. If you have two arbitrators sitting with an umpire, obviously what happens is that the arbitrators regard themselves merely in the light of advocates. That is the practical result that will come about. The original idea is, I think, the right one.

MR. GEDGE: I was not referring to one class of arbitration only; but I may refer to the case of two Railway Companies desiring to come to an arrangement for the joint use of a railway station, or of working powers or matters of that kind, questions very similar to those that would arise under this Bill. How the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wolverhampton can say you increase the expense by holding one inquiry instead of two I do not understand. Under the Bill you have the first arbitration with the hearing of witnesses and counsel, and then if the arbitrators differ you have the whole thing to go over again. I want one inquiry and one expense. Of course, I will place myself in the hands of the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary, and will withdraw the Amendment if he desires me to do so.

THE CHAIRMAN: I may observe that the adoption of the Amendment will require the reconstruction of the clause.

MR. MATTHEWS: I should be loth to submit the clause to reconstruction. Perhaps my hon. Friend will consent to withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): My Amendment standing next is of a verbal character, merely to substitute "any shaft" for the words "the greater portion."

MR. MATTHEWS: In anticipation of that Amendment, let me point out that in the 23rd line the word "shall" must be altered to "may."

Amendment proposed, in line 23, to omit "shall," and insert the word "may."—(*Mr. Matthews.*)

Question, "That the word proposed be there substituted," put, and *agreed to.*

Amendment proposed, in page 24, line 25, to omit the words "the greater portion," and insert "any shaft."—(*Mr. Tomlinson.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'the greater portion' stand part of the Clause."

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): What is the object of this Amendment? Surely, if the greater portion is within the jurisdiction of a certain Quarter Sessions, it is reasonable that application shall be made to that Bench. If you substitute "any shaft," it simply means that the question will be raised by those in a position to raise it.

Mr. TOMLINSON: I will explain if you will sit down.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: Well, that is not the ordinary way of conducting our discussions; but I will yield to the hon. and learned Gentleman's impatience.

Mr. TOMLINSON: It is simply this—that it may be difficult to find out where the larger portion of the mine is.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: But how about your plans?

Question put, and *negatived.*

Question, "That the words 'any shaft' be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 49 (Provisions as to Coroner's inquests on deaths from accidents in mines).

Mr. J. E. SPENCER (West Bromwich): The Amendment I have to move is in the interest of the fellow-workmen of any person who may have been killed by an accident, to allow such workmen to be represented. I do not see why a privilege extended to owners and managers should be withheld from the men. It is a widespread desire among the men that has suggested this Amendment, and I hope it will be acceded to.

Amendment proposed,

In page 26, line 13, after the word "relative," to insert the words, "and any person appointed by the order in writing of the majority of the fellow-workmen."—(*Mr. J. E. Spencer.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): I cannot help pointing out to my hon. Friend that his Amendment would be very difficult to work. A Coroner is, of course, a public officer, and he is controlled by Act of Parliament in the ordinary exercise of his duty, and his duty in holding an inquest on a death in a colliery ought not to be different from his duty elsewhere. His duty is to ascertain the cause of death. How is he to know that a majority of the men depute one person as their representative? Are their signatures to be proved? How is the Coroner to ascertain the genuineness of the signatures of a majority of 400 or 500 men? Must he call witnesses to prove the signatures? Must all this take place before the Coroner to establish the right of the majority to appear? I might point out that the fellow-workmen, unless they are relatives of the deceased, have not an interest in the inquiry before the Coroner. His inquiry is into the cause of the death of the particular man, and who is responsible, not into the management of the mine, not into the conduct of the owners unconnected with the death. It is really only the relatives who are interested, and such an Amendment will throw difficulties in the way of the Coroner discharging his duty, and protract the inquiry to an unlimited extent.

Mr. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck): May I remind the right hon. Gentleman that he has already, in a former part of this Bill, accepted a similar Amendment giving the workmen power to act by majority in reference to the appointment of a check-weighman? The decision of the men is arrived at by ballot, and no objection was urged to that course. The right hon. Gentleman did not then point out that it would be necessary to test the signatures of the workmen. I would also point out that it is not the relatives who may be interested in the cause of death; the workmen employed in the mine may be equally interested, as being subject to similar risks. This is why they ask to have a representation in the Coroner's Court; and there is a very widespread desire among workmen that they should have a *locus standi* there in connection with a matter that may nearly affect their own safety.

Mr. ATHERLEY-JONES (Durham, N.W.): As I have had considerable experience in reference to this point, I may be allowed a word or two. I agree with the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary, so far as I gathered his meaning, that probably in 99 cases out of 100 the interest of the relatives, represented through their counsel or solicitor, is also the interest of the great body of workmen. I have never known a case in which the *locus standi* of a counsel was questioned as representing the interest of the workmen generally employed. But undoubtedly a case might arise where, on the occurrence of an isolated death, there might be no relatives, or they might not instruct counsel, and a highly technical objection might be raised by some—for instance, by the hon. and learned Member for Preston (Mr. Tomlinson) — who might maintain that no *locus standi* was possessed by counsel, who were substantially instructed by the fellow-workmen, or by a miners' association. Therefore, I think the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary might accept the Amendment. With regard to the question whether the person appearing really represented the majority of the workmen, I do not think the Coroner would be required to enter into an inquisitorial examination of that kind; it would only be necessary for a person or persons to say that at a meeting of the lodge or of workmen it was determined that such a counsel should represent them. It is really a small matter, and I cannot see that the insertion of the words in any case would do any harm.

SIR JOSEPH PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): I can testify to the strong feeling existing among workmen in favour of their interests being represented at Coroners' inquests. When you consider that the great majority of deaths are due to single accidents—the fall of a portion of the roof, or similar casualties —and that the men are interested in seeing that what has been the cause of the death of one of their fellows may not occasion other accidents, I think if we can possibly devise some means by which the men may be fairly represented, without interfering with the proper administration of the Court, it ought to be inserted. As to the question whether the person represents the majority of the workmen, I may say the names of all the men appear on the pay bill, and any dispute may be tested by a reference to this list of the men. I would very much impress on the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary, if this can be done by any possible means in the way suggested by the hon. Member, or by any other way, it will give the greatest amount of satisfaction to those interested.

THE CHAIRMAN: I would suggest that, as a matter of reading, the words should come in after the word "occurred," in page 26, line 7.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Amendment *inserted* after the word "occurred," in page 26, line 7.

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES: In moving my Amendment for the omission of the words "subject nevertheless to the order of the Coroner," in page 26, lines 18 and 19, I am quite aware that the words are not a novelty, though I do not understand their importance. It is perfectly understood that a Coroner does not require the words to insure proper decorum and order in the procedure of his Court, and in 99 cases out of 100 no difficulty would arise with or without these words; but the insertion of the words seems to suggest, and might be held by a fastidious Coroner to mean, that he could refuse to allow the authority of persons who are otherwise authorized as representatives. I have in my mind the instance of an eccentric Coroner in Yorkshire, who, I believe, absolutely refused to allow the authority of a counsel sent down to represent the Home Office, and said the matter was one in which the Court would allow no interference whatever, and, I believe, actually prevented examination and cross-examination of witnesses. I had myself some experience of this Coroner's Court, and I confess there was considerable friction in the proceedings. For all reasonable purposes, in the conduct of the proceedings in Court, the words are unnecessary, while they may be understood to suggest to the Coroner that he has a right to intervene and prevent the appearance of parties by counsel, and this, I am sure, is not what the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary intends.

Amendment proposed, in page 26, line 18, to leave out the words "subject nevertheless to the order of the Coroner." —(*Mr. Atherley-Jones.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

MR. MATTHEWS: I think the hon. and learned Member forgets that the words are only adopted from the existing Act. He will find it in Section 2 of the Act of last year, where the power to attend with counsel and witnesses is given, subject to this qualification. The words simply retain the power vested in the Coroner. The right to appear by counsel before a Coroner is a novel right, for this ancient Court is self-constituted and self-sustaining, and does not require the presence of counsel. Last year, when this House gave the right to counsel to appear, it was thought right to add this Proviso, that the Coroner had, nevertheless, the right he had always enjoyed. It was thought right to do this when establishing a variation in the procedure of the Court. I admit, though, that it is not very important one way or the other, and if the Committee show any desire for it I will not insist on the point, and let the words go.

Mr. ATHERLEY-JONES: I am sorry to say the right hon. Gentleman has not convinced me. I really do think that to say that you may have a person representing certain others before the Coroner, and then to give the Coroner the power of forbidding this being done, is useless.

Question put.

The Committee *divided:*—Ayes 100: Noes 62: Majority 38.—(Div. List, No. 379.) [1.50 a.m.]

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I beg to move the following Amendment which stands in my name.

Amendment proposed,

In page 26, after line 21, insert:—"In Scotland it shall be the duty of the Procurator Fiscal of the district within which an explosion, or accident, causing death has occurred, to hold a public inquiry, before the Sheriff of the county, on the body of every person who may be killed by such explosion or accident. The Sheriff shall take the same position, and exercise the same powers, as a Coroner in England, as set forth in the previous portions of this section." — (*Mr. Arthur O'Connor.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

The CHAIRMAN: I think it is more appropriate to the 76th clause.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: Is it not also appropriate to this? I think it would probably be in accordance with the wish of the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House (Mr. W. H. Smith) that it should be disposed of now. He is anxious that as much should be got rid of to-night as possible. As the Committee was informed by the hon. Baronet the Member for the Barnard Castle Division of Durham, the miners attach very great importance to these Coroners' inquests, and to all inquiries as to the cause of deaths in mines from explosions or other accidents. He is right in saying that most of the accidents are simple accidents resulting from a fall of roof or of side; but these things occur in Scotland as well as in England, and the Scotch on these subjects feel very much the same as the English do. When you tickle them they laugh, and when their relatives are hurt they like an inquiry into the cause of death. But then, Sir, there is no system of Coroners' inquests at all, and if a person is killed in a mine the local police make some kind of inquiry; they send to the Inspector, who in turn communicates with the Procurator Fiscal, and some informal inquiry goes on. There are no Coroners in Scotland. It would appear that the proper officer to hold an inquiry of this kind is the Sheriff, at any rate if it is not I should be glad to learn who it is, and of course I should be pleased to alter my Amendment if necessary. As I say, I believe the Sheriff is the proper officer to hold the inquiry. He would be directed by the Procurator Fiscal to hold it in case of a fatal accident, and he would, in fact, discharge the duties which are discharged by Coroners in England, in order that the objects which are obtained by Coroners' inquests in England should be obtained in Scotland. It does not follow that those who vote for this Amendment at all commit themselves to the introduction of "Crowners' quests" in Scotland. The people of Scotland may not have a very high opinion of Coroners' inquests. No doubt in many cases inquiries are held in England which are not at all necessary; but in the case of colliery accidents there is a distinct reason why they should be held when there is the least doubt as to the cause of death. That reason exists, and is as forcible in Scotland as in England, and it does seem unreasonable that so much importance should be attached to inquiries in the Southern part of the Island, and that no such inquiries should be held in the Northern part.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): I have no wish whatever to say one word against "Crowner's quests" in England, but we in Scotland do not quite understand them, and so far as I have been able to observe them they do not always prove the most efficient mode of making inquiries into the cause of death. It seems also to us a hard thing that some inquiry should not be made in cases where a man is injured, but does not happen to die. Now, Sir, in Scotland, when an accident occurs in a pit by which any person is seriously injured—and still more so if the accident be one by which a person is killed—there is an inquiry instantly set on foot. We do not wait for a death to occur in order to make an inquiry, but immediately a serious accident is known of it is the duty of the Sheriff to make inquiry, and I can give a personal assurance that the number of inquiries in the case of death, where there is a doubt as to whether the cause of death was by natural means, is far larger in proportion in Scotland than it is in England. These investigations are made with real care, by a surgeon on the spot, and if it is an important case two surgeons make an examination of the body and a report is sent in to the Crown Counsel. In reference to this sub-section proposed by the hon. Member, I would point out that it is scarcely a proper provision to add to this Bill. This is a Bill called the Coal Mines Regulation Bill; it is not intended by it to alter the general law in either country. It is quite right and proper that as you have Coroner's inquests in England, some rules should be provided as to the mode in which they are to be conducted in the cases of death in coal mines through accident. If anything requires correction in the mode of inquiry in Scotland we shall not object to anything being added to this Bill which may improve that inquiry. But this is a proposal involving a complete change, and the Amendment of the hon. Member would not work. It proposes that the Sheriff shall take the same position, and exercise the same powers as the Coroner in England does. The Coroner in England acts with a jury; it is his duty to see that the inquiry is properly conducted, and the evidence properly adduced, and he has to charge the jury as to the legal bearing of that evidence. But we have no machinery for carrying out anything of that kind in Scotland at present, and the scheme would consequently require to be elaborated and adjusted. Who is to exercise in Scotland the same power as Coroner in England? We have no law there under which it could be exercised. By merely saying that it shall be exercised, you do not provide that the officials of Scotland would be sufficiently instructed. The first part of the sub-section is taken from a certain class of inquiry, which is of an entirely exceptional nature. Some years ago it was thought wise to introduce an exceptional inquiry in the case of persons dying in prison, but I think that that is wholly inapplicable in this case, believing as I do that our system in Scotland is an admirable one, and it would have a bad effect in a direction which my right hon. Friend (Mr. J. B. Balfour) opposite will understand. Take for instance the case of a serious accident happening in which there has been a considerable loss of life, and a great deal of injury to persons and property. The moment it happens the Procurator Fiscal of the district will be busily engaged in making full inquiry into the circumstances. It is his duty to make that inquiry, but he will be seriously hampered in that duty if he is to simultaneously conduct another inquiry under another official. The mode of inquiry would be different—he would be practically carrying on two important inquiries at the same time. I think that it would be altogether undesirable that an alteration in the general law of Scotland should be made to apply to cases of sudden death. I strongly deprecate any alteration in the mode of inquiring into deaths by injuries, and I think it would be more satisfactory if the hon. Member accepts the fact that these inquiries are at present well and completely conducted.

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I think there are some few points on which we should like to have an explanation from the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate. He has not told us whether these inquiries are conducted on oath, whether the relatives of the person injured or killed can be represented and can give and call evidence, and whether the result is made public.

As far as I can understand the position is this. The inquiries are held privately and not on oath, and the result is merely communicated privately to the Crown Counsel for the purpose of enabling him to decide whether or not a prosecution shall be instituted. Surely it will be admitted that that is in no way analogous to the Coroner's inquiry in England. It wants publicity; it wants the evidence taken on oath; it wants the binding force which the Coroner's jury gives the inquiry in England. I think that no case has been made out against the Amendment. I trust the right hon. Gentleman will answer the questions I have put to him.

Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD: I do not think the inquiry by a Coroner's jury would be binding. It would not be so on me if I thought their finding a wrong one. As to what is done in Scotland, the evidence may be taken on oath. Every witness called by the relatives, any person named by the relatives, or any relative, may be examined, and no person who wishes to make a statement on the case is prevented from doing so.

Mr. CHANCE: But he has no *locus standi.*

Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD: Everybody in Scotland has a *locus standi.* and I should be very much astonished if the Procurator Fiscal—in the case of a relative or any person coming forward to give evidence—refused to hear him. It is his duty to examine the matter thoroughly, to sift it thoroughly from beginning to end. The whole matter is before him, he must examine every witness appearing, and it must be a full and complete inquiry. If it were not the Procurator Fiscal would get a rap over the knuckles from Crown Counsel.

Dr. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): I cannot allow the statement of the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate as to the very satisfactory nature of these inquiries to pass without dissent. I think that these are most unsatisfactory, and I know that that is the opinion of workmen engaged in coal mines and other industries. Let me point out that the relatives get no word as to the result of the inquiry; that result is kept a profound secret; it is an official secret. I have asked questions in this House for the satisfaction of the relatives of persons who have been killed, and I have been refused all information on the subject. But I do not think that this Amendment would work. I think it would be better to hold the matter over until we reach Clause 67 with a view to try and formulate a more practicable and workable Amendment, for this certainly would not work. The investigation of these colliery accidents is but a branch of a very much broader subject. I entirely disagree with what the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate has said with regard to the desirability of introducing into Scotland public inquiries in the case of death through accident. I think that the whole subject should be dealt with, that we should have a public inquiry, that it should be entrusted to the Procurator Fiscal, and that the public should know the result arrived at by him. I hope that my hon. Friend will not press this Amendment to a Division, but that he will bring it up at a later stage and in a form in which it would be more workable.

Mr. BURT (Morpeth): I think I may testify from my own knowledge to the fact that the Scottish miners especially are very dissatisfied with the existing method of inquiry into accidents in mines. I have heard the subject brought forward at Trades Union Congresses, and I have heard a strong desire expressed that some change should be brought about. I heartily support the Amendment.

Mr. MASON (Lanark, Mid): I do not rise to prolong the discussion; but I wish to make a suggestion which, I think, the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate may very well accept, and thereby meet the views of hon. Members on this side of the House. Let him leave out all the words after the words "the accident," with reference to the Coroner's inquisition. It would be a great satisfaction to the miners, and to the relatives of those killed in mines, to know that a public inquiry would be held. They are not satisfied with the present system and with what the Procurator Fiscal does, and it would give great satisfaction I know if this Amendment were accepted by the Government. I do not see any great difficulty in it as far as the law is concerned, and if you agree to it there would be great satisfaction felt in Scotland.

Mr. BROADHURST (Nottingham, W.): In the case of all organized associations I know the opinion is in direct variance with the views which the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate has given utterance to. They are all in favour of a public inquiry in cases of accidental death. That is the opinion amongst Scotch working men as far as I have come in contact with them. If the right hon. Gentleman will confer with my hon. Friends on this subject I can assure him he will find there is a great deal of dissatisfaction in Scotch societies in regard to the present system.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I am not particularly wedded to the exact phraseology of the Amendment. I do not think it is a matter which so much concerns the law of Scotland. From a very short dip into the law of Scotland, I can say I did not like it, and I would rather not interfere with it; but this I know, there is a marked difference between the circumstances of England and of Scotland in regard to inquiries into cases of sudden and unexplained deaths, and the miners of Scotland feel that this is not only a grievous difference, but that it is a grievous disadvantage, and a wrong done to them. They are not satisfied with what purports to be a public inquiry into the cause of deaths of this character in Scotland. They do not feel that they are properly protected, that they have the same amount of protection as their fellows in England have, and they ask for some alteration of the law. If the Government will accede to the suggestion of my hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lanark (Mr. Mason) I shall be glad to limit my Amendment as suggested, and to omit the words—

> "The Sheriff shall take the same position and exercise the same powers as a Coroner in England, as set forth in the previous portions of these sections."

If desired I shall be willing to bring the matter up again at a later stage of the Bill.

MR. J. H. A. MACDONALD: I cannot accept that proposal for the reason that this is a matter of general policy. It is possible that in both countries there may be dissatisfaction on the part of miners and a feeling that their interests are not sufficiently looked after. But there are more prosecutions in Criminal Courts in Scotland against persons for causing accidents in mines, and more convictions in proportion to the number of such accidents occurring in Scotland than there are in England.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Committee report Progress; to sit again *To-morrow.*

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES' ACT (1875) AMENDMENT (No. 3) BILL.

(*Mr. Jackson, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

[BILL 353.] CONSIDERATION.

Bill, as amended, *considered.*

MR. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox): I have an Amendment on the Paper and some new clauses to propose, but in view of the fact that this Bill has been framed to meet certain contingencies, and as the whole subject is to be reconsidered next year by a Select Committee, I do not propose to move the new clauses standing in my name.

Clause 8 (Amendment of 38 & 39 Vict., c. 60., s. 29, as to registration of branches).

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): I beg to move to omit Clause 8. The clause is very similar to one which stands on the Paper, but which has not been moved. I move to omit it because it was inserted in the idea that it had the support, and was desired by the Friendly Societies. But it has since transpired that that is not so. Deputations have come up from the principal societies and shown that they are exceedingly hostile to it. As the whole matter is to be dealt with next Session, I think it would be much better for all controversal matter to be left out of the Bill and to be dealt with on that occasion, leaving this Bill to meet only the special exigencies for which it was framed.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be omitted from the Bill."—(*Dr. Cameron.*)

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): When I accepted this clause, I did so on the distinct understanding that it was desired by the societies and that there would be no opposition to it. But since then I have received deputations stating that there is very great opposition to it, and therefore I am willing to accept the Amendment.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Clause *omitted.*

Clause 10 (Construction and printing of principal Acts).

On Motion of Mr. Jackson, the following Amendment made: — In page 3, line 37, after "1879" insert "1882."

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Bill read the third time, and *passed.*

SUPPLY.—REPORT.

Resolution [13th August] *reported.*

"That a sum not exceeding £1,658,807, be granted to Her Majesty to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on March 31st 1888, for Public Education in England and Wales, including Expenses of the Education Office in London."

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I do not want to detain the House at this hour; but on Saturday, when the Education Estimates were under discussion in Committee, I intimated to the Government that I had some matters of importance in which I was interested to bring forward in connection with education, but I then waived my right to bring these matters forward owing to the strong desire expressed by the Government to take the Vote, and proceed with the Scotch Estimates. The right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Council (Sir William Hart Dyke) suggested I should have an opportunity on Report to bring forward the matter; but I am willing—seeing that it is now so late—either to put my few points briefly or, if it is more convenient, I will communicate with him privately, and perhaps he will give me the information I desire.

The VICE PRESIDENT of the COUNCIL (Sir William Hart Dyke) (Kent, Dartford): I think I intimated on Saturday that I purposely avoided alluding to the questions the hon. Gentleman wished to raise, because they are most of them of a rather controversial character, and I think are before the Commission now sitting. I can only say they are questions to which I will give most careful attention, and I shall be glad to meet the hon. Gentleman at any time; but I must observe there are some matters upon which I must speak with all reserve until the Commissioners have reported.

Mr. CONYBEARE: I am very much obliged to the right hon. Gentleman for his courtesy. I am quite aware that some of the points are of a controversial character, and more or less included in the inquiry by the Commission; but there are one or two of much importance to a worthy class of teachers in elementary schools, and I should not fulfil the trust they have reposed in me if I did not call the right hon. Gentleman's attention to them. But I do not wish to trouble the House now, and will avail myself of the permission of the right hon. Gentleman to bring the matter before him more specifically in private.

Resolution *agreed to.*

BANKRUPTCY COURTS (IRELAND) (*re-committed*) BILL.

(*Mr. Sexton, Mr. Chance, Mr. O'Hea, Mr. M'Cartan, Mr. Reynolds.*)

[BILL 278.] COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): In moving that this Bill be set down for Committee to-morrow, I would ask the Government if they will afford facilities to make progress with the Bill? So long ago as the 3rd February the right hon. Gentleman the late Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) said he would do all in his power to facilitate the measure. It has been read a second time, has been before the Examiners, the Committee on Standing Orders, it has been through Committee, and the views of the Treasury have been met by Amendments, and even the Money Resolution has been assented to by the House. It is a non-contentious Bill, and yet it is blocked by Notices from hon. Members opposite. I would ask the Government to afford facilities for its being taken.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Committee be deferred till To-morrow."—(*Mr. Sexton.*)

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Jackson) (Leeds, N.): I understand that the Bill is not blocked by the Government. [An hon. Member: Yes; by Government supporters.] Not by instructions of the Government; the Government have no knowledge of the proceeding. However, I will inquire into the objections to it.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Committee *deferred* till *To-morrow.*

VALUATION OF LANDS (SCOTLAND) AMENDMENT BILL [*Lords*].

(*The Lord Advocate.*)

[BILL 356.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I object to the second reading; and unless I have those facilities afforded me for the Bill to which I just now referred, I shall object to progress being made with other measures of this kind.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! I have put the Question, and I think the Ayes have it.

MR. SEXTON: I will not object to this Bill.

Motion *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *To-morrow*

POLICE CONSTABLES' PENSIONS BILL.

(*Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson, Lord Claud Hamilton, Mr. Burdett-Coutts, Sir George Russell, Mr. Gerald Balfour, Mr. Howard Vincent.*)

[BILL 35.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

SIR HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON (Essex, Epping): I ask the House to affirm the principle of this measure by reading it a second time. It has long been before the consideration of various Parliaments, and the principle was affirmed by the Government which existed before the present in a Bill exactly similar to this. I am quite aware that it is extremely difficult for a private Member to pass a Bill through at this period of the Session; but I would ask the House to affirm the principle, for it would be only doing justice to a deserving body of public servants.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson.*)

BARON DIMSDALE (Herts, Hitchin): I will offer no objection at this stage, but I reserve the right to urge the objections I have to the Bill on its later stages.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I do not think we should be in a hurry to affirm the principle embodied in this Bill which extends the pension list, superannuations, and civil pensions, which is already so great as to cause alarm in the minds of many financiers, and there is likely to be some discussion on this subject when we come to the Superannuation Bill now on the Orders as to whether there should not be some limit to the system. The right hon. Baronet (Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson) admits that it is impossible to carry his Bill this Session, and therefore I would appeal to him, is it worth while to take the opinion of the House and possibly hamper the proper consideration of the subject next Session? I do not say that I altogether condemn the Bill so far as I have ascertained what is in it, but it is an important Bill which a Government should take up rather than leave it in the hands of a private Member. I also quite agree that the police as a body are well deserving of every consideration; but I demur to committing the House at this period of the Session, when there is a thin attendance, to a principle that may or may not be sound, but at any rate deserves more consideration than it is possible now to give it. It would, I think, under the circumstances be better to allow the Bill to stand over to next Session.

MR. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.): Seeing that the right hon. Baronet does not seem disposed to adopt the very reasonable suggestion made, and seeing that we have had no explanation whatever of the provisions of the Bill and that it is now the end of the Session, I think the most convenient course will be to adjourn the debate.

Motion made, and Question put, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Mr. Biggar.*)

The House *divided*:—Ayes 19; Noes 64: Majority 45.—(Div. List, No. 380.)

[2.45 A.M.]

Original Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Monday* next.

SUFFRAGANS' NOMINATION BILL.

(*Mr. Tomlinson, Mr. John Talbot, Mr. Powell, Baron Dimsdale, Admiral Field, Mr. Dixon Hartland, Mr. Penrose Fitzgerald.*)

[BILL 102.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Tomlinson.*)

Mr. M. J. KENNY (Tyrone, Mid): This is an important Bill, and deserves more explanation by way of introduction than the few inarticulate words of the hon. and learned Member for Preston (Mr. Tomlinson). It contains an extremely important proposal to alter the law as it has existed for 300 or 400 years, carrying us back to a period for which the hon. Member for South Belfast (Mr. Johnston) will have great respect. I observe the Bill is backed by a considerable number of names of hon. Gentlemen who sit on the other side, and I take it the Bill is of a partizan, if not of a Party, character. It is not a measure to be decided upon at this hour, and I request the hon. and learned Member not to attempt to proceed with it; if he does we must force the matter to Division.

Mr. BROADHURST (Nottingham, W.): This is far too objectionable a proposal to be assented to at 3 o'clock in the morning. It is a Bill very controversial in character. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] It is in my view. I find on the back of it a long list of names, all from one particular Party, thereby seeming to indicate that it is entirely a Party or sectional movement. So far as I can read the Bill, it proposes to establish, or enable to establish, a new Bishopric in any Parliamentary division of the country. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] At any rate, it is altogether an objectionable proceeding to read a Bill of this kind at such a time, and I trust the House will not assent to it.

Mr. GEDGE (Stockport): The remarks we have just heard show how desirable it is before an hon. Member finds fault with a Bill to make himself acquainted with what that Bill proposes to do. An old Act of Henry VIII. gives power to certain Bishops to appoint Suffragans and give the names of certain towns to such Suffragan Bishops. For instance, the Bishop of London might nominate a Suffragan Bishop of Bedford; but as that place is no longer in the Diocese of London this leads to misconception. The Bill proposes to give the power of naming the Suffragan after any Parliamentary borough or Division within the diocese. How that is objectionable, and how it leads to a wholesale creation of Bishops, passes my wit to comprehend. The Bill does nothing more than amend the old Act, in this particular of names; it is not blocked; and I hope it may be read a second time, and passed into law.

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I really think the hon. Member opposite has no right to complain of the description given to the Bill. The hon. Member was plausible, as he always is; but the simple description of it in the Bill itself bears out to the letter what the hon. Member for West Nottingham says. I have the strongest objection to the Bill, and shall offer it every opposition in my power. I object to a Bishop being stuffed into the constituency I represent, not a full-blown Bishop either, but a Bishop-Suffragan. The people of Cornwall do not want such; they have enough of Bishops already, and I venture to think other parts of the country have the same view. I propose the adjournment of the debate.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Mr. Conybeare.*)

Mr. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.): On the question for adjourning, I think good cause is made out for it. The principle of the Bill is bogus or bosh Bishops, and it really is too absurd for this Parliament to seriously think of taking it into consideration at this hour. Under the circumstances, I think it most desirable that the debate should be adjourned.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): I hope, Sir, that the House will not agree to the Motion for Adjournment. I hope, too, that the country will notice the fact that hon. Members connected with the Roman Catholic Church are leading the opposition to a Bill regulating the internal affairs of the Church of England.

Mr. CONYBEARE: May I be allowed to say that I am not connected with the Catholic Church?

Question put,

The House *divided*: — Ayes 16; Noes 59: Majority 43.—(Div. List, No. 381.) [3.5 A.M.]

Original Question again proposed.

Mr. P. McDONALD (Sligo, N.): I beg to move the adjournment of the House.

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Jackson) (Leeds, N.): I hope the hon. Member will not press that. He must know that this measure——

MR. P. McDONALD: I move it, Mr. Speaker.

Motion made, and Question, "That this House do now adjourn,"—(*Mr. P. McDonald,*)—put, and *negatived.*

Original Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *To-morrow.*

MUNICIPAL REGULATION (CONSTABULARY, &c.) (BELFAST) [SALARIES].

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [5th August].

"That this House will, upon Monday next, resolve itself into a Committee to consider of authorising the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of a portion of the Salaries of any additional Police Magistrates for the borough of Belfast, that may be appointed under any Act of the present Session to amend the Acts relating to the Royal Irish Constabulary, and to make provision for the appointment of a Watch Committee in Belfast, and for other purposes in relation thereto.

Question again proposed.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Resolved, That this House will, To-morrow, resolve itself into a Committee to consider of authorising the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of the portion of the Salaries of any additional Police Magistrates for the borough of Belfast, that may be appointed under any Act of the present Session to amend the Acts relating to the Royal Irish Constabulary, and to make provision for the appointment of a Watch Committee in Belfast, and for other purposes in relation thereto.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARIES [SALARIES, &C].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Resolved, That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of the Salaries, Remuneration, and Expenses of the Boundary Commissioners, Assistant Commissioners, and their Officers, that may become payable, under any Act of the present Session, for appointing Commissioners to inquire and report as to the Boundaries of certain Areas of Local Government in England.

Resolution to be reported *To-morrow.*

SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE (IRELAND) AMENDMENT [SALARY].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Resolved, That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of the Consolidated Fund, of an additional salary to any Judge of the High Court, who may be appointed to exercise the jurisdiction of Judicial Commissioner of the Land Commission, under the provisions of any Act of the present Session to amend "The Supreme Court of Judicature Act (Ireland), 1877," so far as relates to certain Judges; and to the office of the Accountant General.

Resolution to be reported *To-morrow.*

CHARITY COMMISSIONERS (OFFICERS) [SALARIES].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Resolved, That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of the salaries of any Assistant Commissioners that may be appointed under any Act of the present Session to amend the Charitable Trusts Acts, 1853 to 1869, as respects the Officers of the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales.

Resolution to be reported *To-morrow.*

REVENUE [ALLOWANCES, &C].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Resolved, That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of additional allowances for expenses and remuneration to the Clerks to Commissioners of Income Tax and Inhabited House Duties, and of compensation to collectors and assessors of Income Tax for loss of emoluments, under any Act of the present Session to amend the Law relating to Customs and Inland Revenue, and for other purposes connected with the Public Revenue and Expenditure.

Resolution to be reported *To-morrow.*

SUPERANNUATION ACTS AMENDMENT [ALLOWANCES].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Resolved, That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of any Allowances and Gratuities that may be granted under the provisions of any Act of the present Session to amend the Superannuation Acts, 1834 and 1859.

Resolution to be reported *To-morrow.*

House adjourned at a quarter after Three o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, 16*th August,* 1887.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILLS—*First Reading*—Friendly Societies Act (1875) Amendment (No. 3)* (237); Public Libraries (Scotland) Acts Amendment* (238).

Second Reading—Lieutenancy Clerks Allowances* (231); Duration of Speeches in Parliament (97), *negatived.*

Third Reading—Metropolitan Board of Works (Money) * (226); Deeds of Arrangement (No. 2) * (230), and *passed.*

Bill passed—Licensed Premises (Earlier Closing) (Scotland) * (223).

DURATION OF SPEECHES IN PARLIAMENT BILL.—(No. 97.)

(*The Lord Denman.*)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

LORD DENMAN, in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, it would very considerably shorten some speeches in that House at least. There were some noble Lords who had a great facility of expression—the only compliment ever bestowed on him by Earl Granville; but for his own part, when he advocated a cause in which he was greatly interested, he published documents on which he based his case in order not unduly to detain their Lordships' House by quoting the facts in his speech. It had been stated that only the big men spoke in that House, and that, as soon as they had finished, the whole Assembly turned out and went to dinner, or to dress for dinner. The only effect of their Lordships commencing Business at an earlier hour was to enable them to get away sooner.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HALSBURY): I would draw your Lordships' attention to the fact that the noble Lord appears to be infringing a Standing Order of this House as old as the 17th of May, 1606, which provides that when a Bill has been brought into the House and rejected, no Bill of the same character and argument can be begun in the same House during the same Session.

LORD DENMAN said, that this was the same Bill. After having obtained the first reading of it, he had postponed the measure because the newspapers made his speech towards all those likely to be affected by it extremely insolent and offensive. He could not face the public before his speech had appeared in *Hansard.* It had been commented on in *The Scotsman*, and there had been a most able leading article upon it. His proposal was that Parliament should follow the example of Diocesan Conferences and Social Science Congresses, where 20 minutes were allowed to readers of papers, and only six or 10 minutes to any other speaker. The provisions of his Bill were as follows:—

> (1.) "From and immediately after the Royal Assent shall have been given to this Act no Privy Councillor in either House of Parliament shall speak above one hour before a notice hereunder described shall have been given him, and in the case of Members of either House not being Privy Councillors the time before the same notice shall not exceed a quarter of an hour. (2.) The Clerk of each House shall record by writing the commencement of each speech, and at the end of one hour for Privy Councillors, and of a quarter of an hour for all others, the Clerk shall sound such a Bell as is used at Diocesan Conferences. (3.) In case, after the sounding of such Bell, no other Peer or Member of Parliament shall rise to speak, the Peer or Member of Parliament who may have paused in his speech may resume his speech for either an hour or a quarter of an hour, according to the above regulations."

He thought that the principle should be affirmed that it was desirable that Members of both Houses of Parliament should be informed when their speeches were getting to an undue length. He had never made a long speech himself, and he trusted that he never might do so. He was sorry that he should have seemed to have been out of Order, and in conclusion he begged to move the second reading of this Bill.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^a."—(*The Lord Denman.*)

On Question? *Resolved* in the *negative.*

ISLANDS OF THE WESTERN PACIFIC—THE LIQUOR TRAFFIC.

QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

EARL DE LA WARR asked, Whether Her Majesty's Government proposed to take any steps to promote an international understanding with the view of preventing the sale of intoxicating spirits to the Natives of the Western Pacific Islands; also whether there existed any agreement on this subject between Germany and this country which was in force at the present time; and, whether Papers could be laid upon the Table of the House? The noble Earl said, he believed that the subject to which he had referred had been under the notice and consideration of successive Governments, and also that attempts had been made to place some check upon an evil which had tended in a great measure to demoralize the Native population in places where British or other European settlements or Colonies had been established, but it did not appear that much good had as yet resulted. Until some official Papers were laid before the House it would be premature to enter into many details; but there could, he regretted to say, be no doubt—and he believed the fact would be admitted by Colonial Governors—that the trade in intoxicating spirits had been the source of great evil. It had tended to demoralize Native populations, and to hinder, if not, in some instances, to neutralize, efforts which had been made in the cause of civilization. It was, he believed, a notorious fact that European settlers, dating so far back as the time of the Spanish settlements in America, had not infrequently introduced vices and a lower tone of morality than previously existed among the Natives. He did not say that the introduction of intoxicating spirits was the only cause, but it added greatly to it; and thus traders, who invariably followed the steps of those who desired to be the bearers of civilization, had unhappily too often produced the very opposite results of vice and immorality. A great check would doubtless be put upon this if some international understanding could be arrived at by which traffic in spirits and intoxicating liquors could be, if not altogether stopped, at least controlled. The attention of Parliament had of late been called, for political reasons, to the Western Pacific Islands, and he would ask the noble Earl below him whether Papers relating to those Islands on the subject to which he now referred could be laid upon the Table of the House. He would specially mention Papers referring to an agreement which, as he was informed, existed between Germany and this country relative to the sale of intoxicating liquors in the Islands subject to their influence. He might also refer to the Samoa Islands, where German trading in spirits appeared to be carried on to a considerable extent. He would, however, ask the noble Earl not to confine the information which Her Majesty's Government were prepared to give to the places only which he had mentioned. There were, it was to be feared, many others which were suffering from the same evil. He held in his hand the report of a meeting of Native Chiefs recently held at King William's Town, in Cape Colony. One of the speakers, a Caffre Chief, said that he knew it was a custom of the English to sell drink to their subjects; but, he added, why was drink brought into Native localities to impoverish and degrade the people. These words briefly and concisely stated the case which he desired to bring under the notice of Her Majesty's Government. He trusted their Lordships would be put in full possession of information generally on this subject, and especially as regarded the possibility of an international agreement for carrying out a united course of action.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (The Earl of ONSLOW) said, that Her Majesty's Government were fully alive to the danger of allowing not only the trade in intoxicating liquors, but also that in arms and ammunition, in the Western Pacific Islands. Steps had already been taken by Her Majesty's Government to endeavour to arrive at some international agreement on the subject; but, unfortunately, the Government of the United States did not see its way to enter into such an agreement, and Her Majesty's Government had therefore been compelled to abandon the scheme. Her Majesty's Government would, however, lose no opportunity that might be afforded them for renewing negotiations upon the subject. In the absence of the noble Marquess (the Marquess of Salisbury) he was unable to speak with certainty, but he might, he thought, say that there was no agreement existing with Germany on the subject. Each nation prohibited the sale of intoxicating liquors in its own Colonies and protected territories of the Western Pacific. As to the production of Papers, he was not aware that any draft agreement between this country and Germany was in existence; but any Papers relating to the negotiations to which he had alluded there would be no objection to produce; and he hoped that upon that understanding the noble Earl would not press his request.

House adjourned at a quarter before Five o'clock, to Thursday next, a quarter past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, 16*th August*, 1887.

MINUTES.]—New Member Sworn—John Tomlinson Brunner, esquire, *for* Chester County (Northwich Division).

Public Bills — *Ordered* — *First Reading* — Labourers' Allotments (No. 2)* [380].

First Reading—Deeds of Arrangement (No. 2)* [381].

Second Reading—Escheat (Procedure)* [373]; Copyright (Musical Compositions) (No. 2) [322], *debate adjourned.*

Committee—Coal Mines, &c. Regulation [130]—r.p.; Technical Schools (Scotland)* [358]—r.p.

Committee—Report—Post Office Savings Banks and Government Annuities* [344].

QUESTIONS.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—MR. JOHN HILL, J.P., CHAIRMAN OF TOOMEBRIDGE PETTY SESSIONS.

Mr. STACK (Kerry, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether Mr. John Hill, of Bellaghy Castle, who was adjudicated a bankrupt between the years 1850 and 1856, is still in the Commission of the Peace, and presides as Chairman of the Toomebridge Petty Sessions; whether the Bench is composed of five Protestant magistrates; and, whether, having regard to the fact that Toomebridge is a Catholic district, he will ask the Lord Chancellor to consider the propriety of providing for the appointment of at least two Catholic magistrates?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: I understand that the gentleman is in the Commission of the Peace, and attends the Toomebridge Petty Sessions. There is no trace in the records of the Court of Bankruptcy, which have been searched for the past 40 years, that he has been a bankrupt. It is, however, manifest, under any circumstances, that what the pecuniary position of a magistrate may have been at the remote period alluded to is unworthy of consideration at the present time. The religious denomination of the magistrates attending the Toomebridge Petty Sessions appears to be as stated. The Government have no knowledge of the proportion of the different religious denominations of the people in the Petty Sessions' district. There is a good attendance of magistrates at the Petty Sessions. As regards the appointment of any additional magistrates in the district, the proper course is to apply to the Lord Lieutenant of the county.

LAW AND JUSTICE—GRIMSBY COUNTY POLICE COURT—OYSTER STEALING—SEVERE SENTENCE.

Mr. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, If his attention has been called to the case of George Butterley, a Sheffield lad of respectable antecedents, who, during an excursion trip to Cleethorpes, took nine oysters from a box on the beach, for which he was sentenced on the 9th instant, at the Grimsby County Police Court to one month's hard labour; and, if, having regard to the probability that the Bench was unaware of the Royal Assent having been given, on 8th August, to the Probation of First Offenders Act, and its applicability to such first cases, he can see his way, under all the circumstances, to advise the Crown to remit the remainder of the sentence, upon such conditions as may be desirable, with a view of rescuing the boy from the present and future consequences of the prison taint?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): I have received a Report from the Justices, who were of opinion upon the evidence they heard that the case was a bad one, and inform me that oyster stealing has been very frequent of late, and the proprietors suffer serious loss. The information which my hon. Friend has since been good enough to lay before me, and which was not before the magistrates, induces me to think that I am justified in advising Her Majesty that the remainder of the sentence should be remitted.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT—TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION BILL—COMMERCIAL INSTRUCTION.

Mr. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, If the definition of the Technical Instruction Bill is clearly understood to embrace commercial instruction; and if it will be undoubtedly open to Local Authorities to provide educational facilities under the provisions of the Bill for the study of foreign languages, commercial correspondence, advanced bookkeeping, the principles of banking, exchange, discount, Customs, and Mercantile Law, and to obtain grants for proficiency in such subjects as for knowledge of handicrafts, and the science of local trades?

THE VICE PRESIDENT (Sir WILLIAM HART DYKE) (Kent, Dartford): I have only to repeat the answer already given to similar Questions, that it is intended to give freedom to localities as to choice of curriculum, subject to the approval of the Science and Art Department, and, of course, as regards grants, subject to any arrangement that may be made between that Department and the Treasury.

MR. STANLEY LEIGHTON (Shropshire, Oswestry) wished to know whether the definition of technical instruction would exclude manual instruction in the use of tools?

SIR WILLIAM HART DYKE: Does the hon. Gentleman refer to the definition in the Bill?

MR. STANLEY LEIGHTON said, there was no definition in the Bill. There was a book, however, of 200 pages, called *The Science and Art Directory*, and he wished to know whether in that directory technical instruction in the use of tools would be excluded from the sciences and arts which would receive grants?

SIR WILLIAM HART DYKE said, that was a question for the future. At present grants were not given to manual instruction.

PALACE OF WESTMINSTER—MOSAIC OF ST. GEORGE IN THE CENTRAL LOBBY.

MR. DE LISLE (Leicestershire, Mid) asked the First Commissioner of Works, What was the cost of the great mosaic of St. George in the Central Lobby; if he can state the reasons, other than financial, why the remaining arched spaces have been allowed to remain so long in their present bare and unsightly condition; whether designs for these three spaces have ever been executed, and are still in existence; what their character and estimated cost; and, whether Her Majesty's Government can hold out any hope that before long exertions will be made to complete the mosaics in a manner becoming the beauty of the Lobby and the dignity of Parliament?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER (Mr. PLUNKET) (Dublin University): The total cost of the mosaic of St. George in the Central Lobby, including £150 paid to Mr. Poynter for the design, was £665. In consequence of the opinion expressed by Messrs. Cope, Horsley, Ward, Armitage, Poynter, and Watts to then First Commissioner, Mr. Ayrton, in 1870, it was deemed inexpedient to proceed further with mosaic pictures. A Committee was, however, appointed to report on the subject of fresco painting, which was duly presented to the House on the 12th February, 1872, and subsequently printed. Mr. Ayrton submitted to Parliament an Estimate of £500 for 1872-3 for completing one panel in fresco. The item was, however, struck out in Committee of Supply. Nothing has since been done in the matter, nor can I hold out any hope that anything will immediately be done to fill the vacant panel, for which no designs exist.

LAW AND POLICE—EPPING FOREST—ASSAULT BY GIPSIES.

MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) (for Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON) (Tower Hamlets', Poplar) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention had been called to the case of assault by gipsies in Epping Forest on 11th July, for which assault several men were, on 29th July, sentenced by the Bench at the Epping Petty Sessions to various terms of imprisonment; whether he is aware that parts of Epping Forest are infested by gipsies, and that the above is not an isolated case of assault by them; and, what steps he proposes to take to render the Forest safe to visitors? The hon. Gentleman also asked, Whether the right hon. Gentleman has received the Report from the Chief Constable for Essex, with reference to the gipsies who frequent Epping Forest; and, what steps he proposes to take to render the Forest safe to visitors?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): Yes, Sir; I have received a Report from the Chief Constable of Essex, who informs me that since the assault by gipsies in Epping Forest on July 11 he had stationed an extra constable at the village of Theydon Bois, and no further disturbance had taken place. The Railway Authorities have also been requested, and have promised, to communicate with the police at Epping when any number of excursionists may be expected there, so that all proper precautions may be taken. The Chief Constable believes that the sentences inflicted by the Epping Bench will have a deterrent effect in the future; and, with regard to the alleged insecurity of the Forest, he is not aware, excepting this particular case, of any serious assault having taken place.

WAR OFFICE—NAVAL AND MILITARY OFFICERS SERVING UNDER COLONIAL GOVERNMENTS.

General FRASER (Lambeth, N.) asked the Secretary of State for War, When effect will be given to the decision of the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury which was communicated by their Lordships to the War Office on the 19th November, 1886, and by the Colonial Office to the Colonies on the 1st February, 1887, with regard to naval and military officers on the active and retired lists serving under Colonial Governments?

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY, WAR DEPARTMENT (Mr. Brodrick) (Surrey, Guildford) (who replied) said: The Treasury will be empowered to make Rules on the subject if the 6th clause of the Superannuation Acts Amendment Bill now before Parliament becomes law.

WAR OFFICE—THE 11th HUSSARS—RETIREMENT — HONORARY RANK AND PENSIONS.

General FRASER (Lambeth, N.) asked the Secretary of State for War, If it is the case that if the present Commanding Officer of the 11th Hussars so desired, he could retire this year on a pension of £420 a-year, with the honorary rank of Major General, while the late Commanding Officer who was retired from the regiment on the 18th May, 1886, is placed on half-pay, and may not retire to pension until 18th May, 1891, and then without the rank of Major General, unless he repays to the Government the over regulation price of his commission—namely, £2,775, the service of the first named officer being 19 years, and that of the latter 30 years?

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY, WAR DEPARTMENT (Mr. Brodrick) (Surrey, Guildford) (who replied) said: Honorary rank on retirement has been abolised from the end of the present year. It is, therefore, merely an incident of a time when a Colonel may retire whether he would or would not obtain a step of honorary rank. As regards the amount of pension, it is the case that the officer at present commanding the 11th Hussars could if he wished retire at once on £420 a-year; whereas the Colonel lately commanding the regiment could only do so before he reaches the age of 55 by refunding £2,775, which he received as over regulation. I may point out that it is a necessary result of the abolition of purchase that a post-purchase officer is better off than one who obtained his commissions under the purchase system. At the same time, the latter's pecuniary position is greatly better than it would have been under purchase; for to obtain the command of a regiment and a previous majority he would, in all probability, have had to invest large sums, which, together with the £2,775, he could only have recovered by going to half-pay. If he had done so, he would have had to remain for many years on half-pay before he could have obtained an income equal to that now open to him on reaching the age of 55. In making a comparison between these two officers it is only fair to say that the Colonel of shorter service has served continuously in the 11th Hussars, while the other Colonel has made six exchanges, which will sufficiently account for his greater length of service.

POST OFFICE — COMMUNICATION BY TELEPHONE BETWEEN DISTANT TOWNS.

Mr. JACOB BRIGHT (Manchester, S.W.) asked the Postmaster General, If he is aware that there is communication by telephone between Hamburg and Berlin, between Rouen and Paris, and between towns widely distant from each other in the United States; will he state to the House whether his Department has, from time to time, received representations from Manchester in favour of telephonic communication between Manchester and London; and, whether he will take steps that what is done in other countries may also be done in

England, to the advantage of the commerce of the country?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): I have been informed that telephonic communication has been established between Hamburg and Berlin, Paris and Rouen, and between other towns on the Continent of Europe, and also in America. The Post Office has not received representations from Manchester in favour of telephonic communication between that town and London. The United Telephone Company recently asked the terms upon which the Department would provide telephone wires between London and Manchester; but, up to the present time, I have received no answer to the letter which I have caused to be addressed to them on the subject. Having regard to the cheap and swift means of communication which at present exist by means of the telegraph between the principle towns in the United Kingdom, I am inclined to think that it is extremely doubtful whether there would be much public advantage in establishing telephonic communication generally between those towns.

MR. JACOB BRIGHT: Would the right hon. Gentleman say whether it is practicable to have telephonic communication between London and Manchester; and whether there would be any difficulty in establishing such communication?

MR. RAIKES: I am advised that it is practicable to do so; but there would be considerable expense in procuring new way-leaves, as the poles at present in use could not be made available for telephonic purposes. The machinery would be expensive; but, subject to that, I believe there is no practical impossibility.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—SENTENCE ON THE LAD KILLEEN—MAJOR TRAILL.

MR. CAREW (Kildare, N.) asked Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, with reference to the conduct of Major Traill, in sentencing, on the 7th of July, the lad Killeen to three months' imprisonment, in default of finding sureties to keep the peace, Whether he is aware that the offence with which he was charged was committed so far back as the 10th of June; whether Petty Sessions Courts were held twice in the district between the commission of the alleged offence and the day of the trial, and another Petty Sessions Court was held shortly afterwards; whether Major Traill, in so trying and sentencing the accused outside of Petty Sessions, exceeded his jurisdiction; whehe is the same Major Traill who, on a previous occasion, acted similarly, in excess of his jurisdiction, and, when the conviction was quashed, gave as an explanation that he was not a lawyer, and that he did not know the law; whether Killeen got any notice of the charge before his arrest on the morning of the trial; whether, when he asked to be allowed to produce witnesses, Major Traill retorted, "Witnesses be d——d," and forthwith proceeded to pass sentence; and, whether, under the circumstances, the Government will cause an inquiry to be made into the conduct of Major Traill, and order Killeen to be released from his sureties?

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.) said, that before the right hon. Gentleman answered the Question, perhaps he would be permitted to ask him whether it was a fact that no life had ever been taken in any district while it had been under Major Traill's charge; whether each district under his charge had been exceptionally free from crime; and, whether Major Traill had been warned three times by the Government, within five months, that his assassination had been arranged for, and that he was never to move about without police protection; and whether it was a fact that a fund for his assassination had been subscribed in a public-house in Dublin in 1882; and how the Government contemplated recognizing Major Traill's services?

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): Mr. Speaker, may I ask you, Sir, how does the Question of the hon. Member arise out of the Question on the Paper?

MR. SPEAKER: It has some relation to the Question on the Paper.

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: If the hon. Member (Mr. Johnston) gives Notice of the Question I shall endeavour to answer it. I have no information whatever on the subject. With regard to the Question on the Paper, the facts are not quite accurately given in the Question. The offence was committed on June 18, and the conduct of Joseph Killeen was referred to during the hearing of a case at Petty Sessions on the 5th of July (the first Petty Sessions after the offence) brought by Mr. Tyrrell, who, after Petty Sessions, made an information, on which the magistrate issued his warrant. When Killeen was brought before the magistrate, he thought, having regard to all the circumstances, the case should be treated as one of misbehaviour, and not as one of crime; and called on him to find sureties for good behaviour for three months, which he at once did. He brought his sureties with him, and there was no sentence passed. Major Traill denies that he ever acted in excess of his jurisdiction, or that on a previous occasion, when a conviction was quashed, he gave any such explanation as that he was not a lawyer and that he did not know the law, or that he ever made use of such an expression as "Witnesses be d——d." He intended to adopt a lenient course. There is no necessity for instituting any further inquiry into the matter; but as there appears to have been some misunderstanding as to the procedure, the release of the bail is under consideration.

Mr. SEXTON asked whether, as a matter of fact, Major Traill did not exceed his jurisdiction; and also whether, in reply to a request of the accused to be allowed to provide witnesses, Major Traill used the forcible observation referred to in the last paragraph but one of the Question; and whether, during the existence of the Land League, Major Traill had not gone on a Sunday to a police barracks, and constituted himself a Court there, and passed sentences of imprisonment on several men; whether Baron Fitzgerald had not stated subsequently that Major Traill had sent those men to gaol illegally; and whether Major Traill's counsel apologized for him by explaining that he was only a major in the Army, and could not be expected to know the law; and whether, under these circumstances, Major Traill was a fit and proper person to be allowed to administer the Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) Act?

Colonel KING-HARMAN said, with regard to the first Question of the hon. Gentleman, the Government saw no necessity for instituting any further inquiry; and he, therefore, presumed the opinion of the Law Advisers of the Crown was that Major Traill did not exceed his jurisdiction. He had already stated that Major Traill denied that he had ever used the expression, "Witnesses be d——d." As to the third Question, perhaps the hon. Member would give Notice of it.

Mr. M'CARTAN (Down, S.) asked, whether it was not a fact that Major Traill had violated the 8th section of the Petty Sessions Act in not giving the accused party an opportunity of having his case heard at Petty Sessions?

Mr. JOHNSTON said, before the right hon. and gallant Gentleman answered that Question, he wished to ask if the Government would extend protection to those who loyally discharged their duties in carrying out the law in Ireland?

Colonel KING-HARMAN said, Her Majesty's Government always extended the protection of the law to those who loyally discharged their duties in carrying out the law, and intended always so to do. Perhaps the hon. Member for South Down (Mr. M'Cartan) would give Notice of his Question.

LAW AND JUSTICE—UNCONDITIONAL PARDONS — RESTITUTION OF CIVIL RIGHTS.

Sir GUYER HUNTER (Hackney, Central) asked Mr. Attorney General, Whether the grant of a free and unconditional pardon to an individual from the Crown for an offence of which, on inquiry, it was found he had been wrongly convicted, re-establishes him in his civil rights?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir Richard Webster) (Isle of Wight): It is not possible fully to answer the Question of the hon. Member owing to the magnitude of the subject to which it refers. Speaking generally, however, the granting of a free and unconditional pardon restores to the individual pardoned his civil rights as far as the future is concerned. As regards the past, it depends upon the time and the circumstances under which the conviction took place, and under which the pardon was granted. If the hon. Member will communicate with me with reference to any special case, I shall be pleased to give him any assistance in my power.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION — CAVAN SUB-COMMISSION SITTING AT KINGSCOURT, CO. CAVAN.

MR. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that 130 tenants who, in or near Kingscourt, County of Cavan, and who intend to apply to the Land Court at its next sitting in that county to have fair rents fixed, will be obliged to attend with their witnesses at Baillieborough, a place six miles distant; if so, whether he will communicate with the Land Commissioners, with a view to their holding the next sitting of the Cavan Sub-Commission in Kingscourt, in which place the landlords and agents concerned also reside?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said, the Land Commissioners reported that no sittings had yet been fixed for County Cavan. When they were fixed, due regard would be paid to the interests of all concerned.

THE PARKS (METROPOLIS)—DOGS IN THE ORNAMENTAL WATERS.

MR. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.) asked the First Commissioner of Works, Why it is forbidden to bathe dogs in the ornamental waters of Regent's Park; if it is allowed in the Serpentine; and, whether he will allow of it during specified hours daily under proper conditions?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER (Mr. PLUNKET) (Dublin University): It is forbidden to bathe dogs in the waters of all our London Parks except the Serpentine; and I do not think that it would be desirable that this rule should be altered or relaxed as regards Regent's Park, because the water-fowl would certainly be chased, and probably injured, in the narrow waters, even if the permission were restricted to certain hours. The waters of the Serpentine are much wider and the wild-fowl fewer.

SUPPLY—CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES—CLASS III., VOTE 14—TRANSFER OF CERTAIN CHARGES.

GENERAL SIR GEORGE BALFOUR (Kincardine) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Why the following sums, now entered in Vote 14, Class III., under Lord Advocate, have not been transferred to the Vote for the Secretary for Scotland — namely:—Legal Secretary, £500; Crown Agents and Clerks, £1,990 Expenses of Legal Secretary, £200; and, under Vote 16, Class III., the following: Preparation of Bills, £800; Clerks for preparing Returns to Parliament, £130; Fees and Expenses of Crown Agents, £50?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.), in reply, said, he did not quite understand what the hon. and gallant Gentleman referred to, because the charges he specified had always been provided for in Class III. That did not apply only to the Scottish Department, as the hon. and gallant Gentleman well knew. Class III. of the Civil Service Estimates included legal and cognate charges relating to the Department of the Secretary for Scotland, the establishment of which made no change requiring the transference of these charges to Class II.

RAILWAYS (ENGLAND AND WALES)—EXEMPTION FROM PASSENGER DUTY OF RAILWAYS ON PUBLIC ROADS.

MR. PICTON (Leicester) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, If he will be good enough to state on what Statute, or on what authority, the exemption from Passenger Duty of railways on public roads, as in the case of Volk's Brighton Electric Railway, is dependent?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square), in reply, said, that that was not exactly a case of exemption. Volk's Brighton Electric Railway did not fall within the legal definition of a railway, and was not subject to Passenger Duty. It, however, paid duty in another form; for by a clause in the Customs and Inland Revenue Act of 1883 any vehicle drawn or propelled on a road or tramway by steam or electricity was subject to Carriage Duty.

In reply to a further Question,

MR. GOSCHEN said, that the words he had quoted confirmed the view that tramways were not liable as railways to Passenger Duty.

WAR OFFICE (AUXILIARY FORCES)—VOLUNTEER MEDICAL OFFICERS.

SIR GUYER HUNTER (Hackney, Central) asked the Secretary of State for

War, Whether there is any objection to the adoption of the recommendations of the Volunteer Medical Association with reference to rank, &c., of Volunteer Medical Officers, submitted to the War Office?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): This Question has also been brought before me by my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Holborn (Colonel Duncan). I am able to approve generally the proposals of the Association. Some questions of detail still remain to be considered. But I may say that the grant of the rank of surgeon-major to Volunteer Medical Officers after 12 years' service and the insertion of their names in the Army List as Volunteer Medical Staff will be approved.

CHARITABLE LOTTERIES.

MR. FISHER (Fulham) (for Mr. MORGAN HOWARD) (Camberwell, Dulwich) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been called to the following matter:—

> "A drawing of small prizes was instituted in connection with St. Anthony's Franciscan Church, East Dulwich, to provide a day's country excursion for the poor children of the church schools; the prizes were given by friends, and the tickets distributed;
>
> "The children had their excursion; but, owing to the interference of the police, who declared the drawing was illegal, and that the money realized by the tickets (£13) could not be retained, the minister of the church has personally to bear the loss;"

whether he is aware that similar efforts are made every year by various Religious Bodies to raise small funds for like purposes; and, whether he can interfere to protect persons engaged in these charitable undertakings?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): At the beginning of July last the attention of the police was called to the exhibition for sale of tickets for the lottery referred to, and, in accordance with practice, the reverend Gentleman was informed that his action was illegal. All lotteries not authorized by Parliament are illegal under 42 *Geo.* III., *c.* 119; and so long as that law is not repealed I cannot properly interfere to protect persons engaged in an act contrary to law, however charitable and deserving of sympathy their motives may be.

PUBLIC HEALTH—REPORT ON INFANT MORTALITY.

MR. PICTON (Leicester) asked the President of the Local Government Board, Whether he is now able to communicate to the House any Report or other result of the Departmental inquiry undertaken six years ago in reference to the large amount of infant mortality caused at many centres of population by summer and autumnal diarrhœa; whether he is aware that several Local Authorities have for six years been incurring expense for meteorological observations made at the request of the Department, and for the special purpose of the Departmental inquiry; and, whether, if he cannot now state the result of the inquiry, he will take means to have it completed shortly, and to lay a Report upon the Table of the House, or to issue it during the Recess?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): The inquiry the hon. Member refers to is a general one, relating not only to the cases of infant mortality from summer diarrhœa in some 30 large towns and cities in various parts of England and Wales, but also to the relations which this disease bears to choleraic outbreaks. The investigations are, to an important extent, limited to some six weeks in the year during which the disease is most fatal, and as they have progressed it has become necessary to initiate fresh lines of research. The magnitude of the interests involved may be judged of from the fact that during the third quarter of last year no less than 15,396 deaths were registered as due to diarrhœa in England and Wales, and that 6,171 of these were in 10 of the great towns. During the prevalence of cholera in Europe in the last two years the services of the Inspector supervizing this inquiry had to be, to a large extent, superseded; but the work is now actively progressing, and the Board hope that when the results obtained during the present summer have been received and examined the preparation of a summary Report on the whole inquiry may be proceeded with.

LAW AND JUSTICE—THE MAYOR OF TAUNTON.

MR. PICTON (Leicester) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been called to the conduct of the Mayor of Taunton in insisting on his right to preside in the police court over a case in which he was an important witness; whether he has seen the following official note made by the magistrates' clerk :—

> "Mattock against Burch. Assault. Mr Crawshaw, for the complainant, objects to the Mayor sitting on this charge, on the ground that he has been summoned as a witness for the complainant, and also on the ground that he has, as a friend of the defendant, been endeavouring to settle the case out of court;"

whether he is aware that the summons was adjourned in consequence of the protest of Mr. Crawshaw; and, if the facts are as stated, what remedy is open to the party aggrieved?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): The facts are, I am informed, as stated in the Question. It appears to me that it would be extremely wrong of the Mayor to act as justice if, from any cause, he had a real bias in favour of either party; and if such a bias existed I presume it might be the ground of an application to set aside his decision. This is, however, a difficult question of law on which I cannot give any opinion.

LAW AND JUSTICE—THE STATUTE LAW OF SCOTLAND.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether there exists any revised edition of the Statutes of Scotland passed before the Act of Union, corresponding to the recently-published revised edition of the Ante-Union Statutes of the Parliament of Ireland; and, if no such edition exists, whether Her Majesty's Government will direct the preparation of an edition of all such and so many of the Statutes of the Parliament of Scotland passed before the Union as are still legally binding and effective, so that Scotland, as well as England and Ireland, may possess a complete edition of all her Statute Law now in force; and, whether, if legislation be needed for the purpose of repealing Acts whose authority has, owing to alleged desuetude, become doubtful, he will introduce next Session such a Bill as may be proper for the purpose aforesaid?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): There is no revised edition of the Scotch Acts. I cannot, on behalf of Her Majesty's Government, enter into any undertaking in the direction pointed out by the hon. Member; but the matter will be looked into before next Session.

POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—POST OFFICE IN WARING STREET, BELFAST.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.) asked the Postmaster General, Whether he is aware of the inconvenience caused to the public by the delay in opening the post office in Waring Street, Belfast; and, whether he can state definitely when a receiver will be appointed, and on what date the office will be open for business?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University), in reply, said, on the 25th of July the Treasury nominated a receiver to the new post office about to be established in Waring Street, Belfast. As soon as she had obtained a suitable house in Waring Street, which she must do without further delay, business will be commenced. If any unreasonable delay occurs, the nomination will be cancelled.

WAR OFFICE (THE AUXILIARY FORCES)—ALLOWANCE TO VOLUNTEERS FOR GREAT COATS.

COLONEL EYRE (Lincolnshire, Gainsborough) asked the Secretary of State for War, If corps of Volunteers who may purchase great coats this year will be allowed 2*s.* per annum, according to the Report of the Committee; and, whether the 2*s.* will commence with the next capitation grant?

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, WAR DEPARTMENT (Mr. BRODRICK) (Surrey, Guildford) (who replied) said: It is intended to issue with the capitation payment next year 2*s.* for each great coat of approved pattern in possession of the regiments on the 1st of September in the present year; and instructions will be sent out to the various Commanding Officers as to furnishing the necessary certificates.

LAW AND POLICE—ARREST OF FRED. HENDERSON AT NORWICH.

MR. M'CARTAN (Down, S.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the arrest of Fred. Henderson at Norwich, Whether he has now received from the Mayor of

Norwich the information for which he applied concerning the case; and, whether he will give the particulars of same?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I have obtained a reply from the Mayor to the Questions addressed to me by the hon. Member on the 9th instant. It is a fact that Henderson was struck on the head; but Constable Mills says he struck him accidentally, as his horse was frightened and was plunging. The medical officer who saw Henderson afterwards stated that there was a slight bruise on the scalp. I am informed that it is not a fact that Henderson was dragged off to the police station at a quick trot through the streets. There was great disorder at the time of Henderson's arrest; and it was not until he had obstinately refused to move on, and persistently continued to incite the crowd, that he was arrested. The authorities are not aware, and do not believe, that there are a large number of witnesses in Norwich prepared to testify to the misconduct of the police and to the serious attack made on Henderson. There are other points dealt with in the Report which I have received, but it is too long to read to the House; but I will be happy to show it to the hon. Member if he wishes.

MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.W.) asked the Home Secretary, whether, in view of the fact that these charges of misconduct against the police were becoming monotonous, he would cause inquiry to be made into the whole matter?

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne) asked, whether the right hon. Gentleman did not obtain his information from the Mayor of Norwich, who was one of the chief promoters of, and speakers at, the meeting attended by the Marquess of Salisbury, and who received a letter from the noble Marquess expressing his great satisfaction at the way in which the police performed their duties on the occasion?

MR. M'CARTAN wished to know whether, if the Home Secretary was furnished with the names of a number of most respectable citizens of Norwich who saw Henderson dragged through the street by the constable, with his horse at a full trot, to the Guildhall, he would order an inquiry into the matter?

MR. MATTHEWS: I have already stated, in answer to a Question, that I am not the proper authority to inquire into the conduct of the Borough Police, who are not under my jurisdiction. The person from whom I received my information was not the Mayor, but the Town Clerk, who informs me that the Mayor was present at the meeting in his private capacity, and that he only spoke on the vote of thanks to the chairman.

MR. CONYBEARE asked, whether there was any means of getting at the right authority; and whether they could summon the Mayor of Norwich to the Bar of the House?

[No reply.]

ADMIRALTY — RE-ORGANIZATION OF THE CLERICAL ESTABLISHMENT.

MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether it is true, as stated in the Press, that a Departmental Committee is pressing a scheme for the reorganization of the clerical establishment of the Admiralty, which appears to show an immediate saving of £10,000 a-year, and an ultimate saving of £25,000 a-year; how many similar re-organization schemes have taken effect at the Admiralty during the last 10 years; and, whether, before the new scheme is adopted, he will lay it upon the Table, in order that the House may have an opportunity of forming an opinion upon it?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing) (who replied) said: Inquiries are being made inside the Admiralty to ascertain the reductions advisable in the clerical staff. Two reductions, I am informed, have been made during the last 10 years in the Admiralty establishments. Any reductions made are carried out on the responsibility of the Parliamentary Heads of the Department, and the Government cannot undertake to delegate this portion of their duties to the House of Commons.

METROPOLITAN POLICE—WATCHING DISORDERLY HOUSES.

MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether he sanctioned the issue of the recent Order of the Chief Commissioner of Metropolitan Police, that constables shall not, as heretofore, be employed in watching disorderly houses; and whether the Chief Commissioner is solely responsible for this Order?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): No, Sir; I did not sanction the issue of this Order. The Chief Commissioner is solely responsible for its issue.

TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION—REPRINT OF THE REPORT.

MR. F. S. POWELL (Wigan) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether it is intended to reprint, without delay, such volumes of the Report on Technical Instruction as are out of print, or are likely to be out of print at an early date?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): I understand that the number of copies remaining of the First and Second Reports of the Royal Commission on Technical Instruction is very small; and if there should prove to be a large demand for them I shall be prepared to give directions for reprinting them for sale in a convenient form. With regard to the four volumes of Appendices to the Reports of the Commissioners, the supply of copies on hand is sufficient to obviate any immediate necessity for reprinting.

MR. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.): Arising out of this Question, will the First Lord of the Treasury say if the Technical Instruction Bill is to be proceeded with this Session; and, if so, when? ["Order, order!"]

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I am not prepared to give an answer at this moment.

THE JUBILEE CELEBRATION IN CEYLON—ARABI PASHA AND OTHER EGYPTIAN EXILES.

MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether his attention has been drawn to a statement to the following effect which appeared in *The Times of Ceylon*, and in *The Lahore Tribune*, with reference to the alleged treatment of Arabi Pasha and his fellow-prisoners, Yakub Sami and Fehmy Pasha in Ceylon:—

> "A Jubilee procession being formed to pass before the Governor, some troops marched by, after which Arabi, Yakub, and Fehmy stepped out, and in a sad and solemn manner walked past the pavilion;"

and, whether there is any truth in this statement; and, if so, whether Arabi and his friends formed part of the procession as captives of war or as subjects of the Queen?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir HENRY HOLLAND) (Hampstead): I have seen in *The Times of Ceylon* and other newspapers a report of the Jubilee celebrations, which included a procession past the Governor representing all races and creeds. The troops did not form part of this procession, but at the head of it were about 2,000 Sunday-school children, and among those that followed were representatives of the Mahomedan community in Ceylon, including the Egyptian exiles. They did not attend in any sense as prisoners, or by direction, but merely with the other inhabitants of the Island who voluntarily took part in the celebrations. I may add that it appears in the same paper from which the hon. Member quotes that on the following day three of the Egyptian exiles presented an Address to the Governor for transmission to Her Majesty, containing loyal expressions of congratulation in connection with the Jubilee, and of heartfelt thanks for the just and generous treatment accorded to them in Ceylon, and expressing further their pleasure that they were accorded the privilege of taking a part themselves in the enjoyment of the day.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES—THE ROYAL LIVER FRIENDLY SOCIETY.

MR. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether his attention has been called to the case of an agent of the Royal Liver Friendly Society, now deceased, who, during his lifetime, and whilst in receipt of a salary from the Society of £11 per week, levied from four collectors of the Society sums amounting in the aggregate to £2,210; whether a sum amounting to £1 per week per collector was paid to the heirs of the said agent under threats of instant dismissal; whether, on certain members of the Society, including the Local Board in Glasgow, remonstrating with the central Board of Management in Liverpool, on the contravention of the Rules of the Society and injustice to the collectors, the four collectors referred to were summarily dismissed, though some of them had been in the service of the Society for 15 years; and, whether he will order a thorough and impartial investigation into the whole case, with a view to justice being done?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): The matters referred to relates to a Society the head-quarters of which are in England, and I have no authority to interfere with its proceedings unless crime is alleged. No charge of any kind has been laid before me for investigation. If any civil wrong has been done, a Civil Law Court, and not the Criminal Authorities, should be applied to.

INLAND REVENUE—INCOME TAX—CO-OPERATIVE ASSOCIATIONS.

MR. SINCLAIR (Falkirk, &c.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Why a different method is adopted in dealing with Co-operative Associations, as regards their liability to pay Income Tax, to that adopted with respect to other commercial joint stock undertakings and private firms and individuals?

MR. A. H. D. ACLAND (York, W.R., Rotherham) said, before the Chancellor of the Exchequer answered that Question, he would ask him whether it was not the case that the working men who were members of the Societies had no desire to evade the Income Tax, but that they had always been under the belief that 99 out of 100 of their members would not be liable; and, whether it would not cost the Exchequer more in consequence of the number of claims for exemption which would be sent in than would ever be paid by way of tax?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): My hon. Friend who has just sat down has answered the Question of the hon. Member, instead of asking another. There is a great deal of force in the point of view put by the hon. Gentleman. As I find that a good deal of misapprehension exists in regard to the levying of the Income Tax upon Co-operative Associations, I am glad to have an opportunity to state the real facts of the case. Every shareholder in a Co-operative Society is liable to Income Tax if his income from all sources is over £150 a-year. Where a Society consists to any great extent of shareholders whose incomes are over £150 a-year, it is found convenient to assess the Association direct, and the existing law has been framed to secure that as far as possible. Where it consists almost entirely of persons whose incomes are under £150, the trouble and expense of assessing the Association, only to return the tax again in most cases to the shareholders with an income of less than £150, far outweighs the advantage derived from the direct assessment of the Association, while the liability of any shareholder, whose income is over £150, is not affected. In the same way, a partner in any business, whatever the profits of the firm may be, is entitled to exemption from Income Tax, if his income from all sources is under £150 a-year, and if the firm to which he belongs has been assessed the duty paid on his share of the profits is returned to him. There is, therefore, no exemption of Co-operative Associations; but the tax is not levied direct upon them, because, in most cases, it would have to be returned to the members of the Co-operative Associations; and it is with the view of saving expense and trouble to all concerned, in cases where it may be presumed that the majority of the members of an Association are not earning profits of £150 a-year, that no tax is levied on the Association as a whole.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): Does that apply also to penny banks?

MR. GOSCHEN: My hon. Friend must give me Notice of that Question. I am not prepared to risk any portion of the Revenue by an impromptu answer.

TRINIDAD — EXPORT OF ASPHALTE FROM THE PITCH LAKE.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne) asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether it is the intention of the Government to grant a sole concession of the right to win and export Trinidad asphalte from the Trinidad Pitch Lake to any person or persons; and, if so, upon what terms as to minimum rent, royalties, and term of concession; whether he is aware that the supply of such asphalte is practically inexhaustible; whether many and advantageous offers have been made to the Government by various persons for the concession; and, what course has been adopted by the Government to invite tenders for the concession?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Sir Henry Holland) (Hampstead): I stated, in answer to a Question by the hon. Member for the Kirkdale Division of Liverpool (Mr. Baden-Powell) on the 7th of June, that the Government and Legislature of Trinidad were considering an offer by the lessees of part of the Pitch Lake to take a lease of the whole on terms which would insure a minimum royalty of £10,000 a-year. That offer, and the whole question of dealing with the lake, are still under the consideration of the Colonial Legislature, and it is expected that their opinion will be expressed about the 1st of September. It is believed that the supply of asphalte is practically inexhaustible. I am not aware that any other offer has been made for an exclusive concession, nor would any person, except those who held leases of portions of the lake, be able to make such an offer. The Government is not in a position to invite tenders for an exclusive concession, as part of the lake is already leased for a considerable period.

ARMY—THE GUARDS—COMMISSIONS TO MEN IN THE RANKS.

Mr. COGHILL (Newcastle-under-Lyme) asked the Secretary of State for War, If any commissions have been given to men in the ranks in the regiments of the Guards during the last 10 years?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. E. Stanhope) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): Yes, Sir; 22 commissions have been so given, including those of Quartermaster and Riding Master.

POST OFFICE (TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT)—CAPTAIN PLUNKETT'S TELEGRAM.

Mr. HOOPER (Cork, S.E.) asked the Postmaster General, Whether an offer has at any time been made of £50 or any other sum as a reward for information concerning the divulging through the Postal Telegraph Department to a Cork newspaper of Captain Plunkett's telegram of 9th March; and, if so, whether the offer has been withdrawn or is still in existence?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University), in reply, said, he had no knowledge of any such reward having been offered as the hon. Member referred to.

POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—DEFECTIVE ARRANGEMENTS AT TEMPLEDERRY, CO. TIPPERARY.

Mr. P. J. O'BRIEN (Tipperary, N.) asked the Postmaster General, Whether he has received a Memorial from the inhabitants of Templederry, County Tipperary, with reference to the great inconvenience they at present labour under owing to the defective postal arrangements for that neighbourhood since the withdrawal of the post office from the village; whether the letters for Templederry, under present arrangements, fail to be delivered at the hour appointed according to the Post Office Regulations; whether it is further contemplated to have the Templederry post delivered at Lattera, four miles away; and, whether he will have the public convenience provided for in accordance with the prayer of the Memorialists by the appointment of a rural messenger to meet the mail car from Nenagh and Templemore at Curabaha, and so have their letters delivered in due time to the inhabitants in Templederry and district?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University): I beg to state that no change has been made in the position of the post office at Templederry since the appointment of the present sub-postmaster in 1885, and that I have received the Memorial from the inhabitants of Templederry to which he refers. I had already sanctioned a re-arrangement of the post by which Templederry is served, under which the desired improvement will be effected; and the altered post will commence so soon as a rural postman to perform the service between Latteragh and Templederry has been appointed.

NORTH AMERICAN FISHERIES—SEIZURE OF THE AMERICAN FISHING SCHOONER "PERKINS."

Sir WALTER FOSTER (Derby, Ilkeston) (for Mr. Gourley) (Sunderland) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether it is correct that the American Fishing Schooner *Perkins* has been seized for shipping seven seamen off Prince Edward's Island inside the disputed fishery limits; and, if so, whether, in the absence of a Consular Convention between the two countries, the seizure is legal; whether he is aware that, owing to these seizures, the United States Government have ordered that all British sealing and fishing vessels found within the acknowledged Treaty limits of Alaska are to be seized, and that they have also instructed Admiral Luce, of the United States Navy, to withdraw from Canadian waters; and, whether it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government to accede to the desire of the American Government in the appointment of a Commission to inquire into all matters appertaining to the existing Anglo-American fishery disputes, with a view to an amicable adjustment, and the stoppage of further uncivilized seizures?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): No Report has yet been received by Her Majesty's Government on the subject of the first paragraph of the Question. Until the arrival of such Report, which manifestly cannot be prepared without investigation on the spot, it would be premature to express any opinion as to the legality of the seizure. Information has reached Her Majesty's Government of the recent seizure of certain British schooners engaged in seal fishing in Behring Sea, and the Government are in communication with the British Minister at Washington on the subject; but they are not aware that any such instructions as those indicated in the Question have been issued by the United States Authorities.

PARLIAMENT—BUSINESS OF THE SESSION.

MR. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, If he will undertake that any Government Bills not yet introduced shall be introduced and printed forthwith?

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers the Question I should like to ask him whether, having regard to the fact that there are now 116 Votes to obtain in Supply; that there are 39 Government Bills on the Order Book; and that there are 41 Bills of private Members on the Order Book, the Government will abstain from bringing in any further Bills; and whether the right hon. Gentleman will take the usual steps at this season of the year to remove the greater part of these 80 Bills from the Order Book, and endeavour to bring this protracted Session to a close?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): There is no one in this House who would be more relieved by the close of this very protracted Session than myself. The Question of the right hon. Gentleman is, therefore, one that I should be exceedingly glad to answer in the sense in which the right hon. Gentleman desires. In the 39 Bills mentioned are included a very large number of very small measures, which the experience of the right hon. Gentleman must have told him are absolutely necessary, from time to time, for the proper conduct of Departmental business. There are very few of these 39 measures which ought to take more than a very few minutes. ["Oh!" and "Hear, hear!"] I speak to right hon. Gentlemen who are acquainted with Public Business, and who will quite accept the statement I make. I undertook yesterday to say something about Business on Thursday, and I propose now to postpone any remarks on particular Bills until Thursday; but, with regard to the Question of the hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. E. Robertson), I can assure him no Bill will be introduced which, by any possibility, can be avoided, or which is not necessary in the interests of the Public Service. I have certainly no wish to ask the House to consider any Bill which, in my judgment, is not absolutely necessary for the protection of the public interests.

MR. E. ROBERTSON: My Question was, whether the right hon. Gentleman would undertake that such Bills as might be necessary should be introduced forthwith?

MR. W. H. SMITH: Well, Sir, I hope there will be none; but if there is any Bill it will be introduced forthwith.

MR. BROADHURST (Nottingham, W.) asked, whether the Labourers' Allotments Bill, being the first Order, would be proceeded with on Wednesday, provided that the Coal Mines, &c. Regulation Bill passed through Committee that evening?

MR. W. H. SMITH: I should be glad to proceed with it; but we are under an engagement to proceed with the Diplomatic Vote if the Coal Mines, &c. Regulation Bill is through to-night. I have made an engagement to the House, and I wish to keep it.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): And when the Diplomatic Vote is carried we are to proceed with the Irish Votes?

MR. W. H. SMITH: Yes; that was the understanding, subject to the Irish Land Law Bill.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.) said, it would be convenient if an understanding could be arrived at as to when the Irish Votes would definitely be taken.

MR. W. H. SMITH said, he had been anxious to meet the views of hon. Members, and had promised that the Irish Votes should be taken after the Diplomatic Vote, the Irish Land Law Bill, and the Committee stage of the Coal Mines, &c. Regulation Bill. He would endeavour to fix a date to suit the convenience of the House. That date might be Monday or Tuesday next.

MR. DILLON said, what he understood was this—that they would proceed regularly with Supply, postponing the Irish Votes until the rest had been disposed of. He mentioned this for the guidance of the right hon. Gentleman before coming to a decision; and, considering the Business before the House was not Irish Business, it would be more for the convenience of Irish Members if the Irish Votes were postponed until the rest had been disposed of.

MR. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.) asked, whether the right hon. Gentleman proposed to take the Technical Schools (Scotland) Bill that night; and, if so, whether he would not go further than to move the Speaker out of the Chair?

MR. W. H. SMITH: We will not go further than that, Sir.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) asked, whether it would be possible to take into consideration the Lords' Amendments to the Truck Bill after the Irish Land Law Bill?

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) inquired, whether the Post Office Savings Banks Bill would be taken that night?

MR. W. H. SMITH: I hope, Sir, the Post Office Savings Banks Bill will be taken to-night. In answer to the Question of the hon. Member for Northampton, I have every hope that an arrangement may be made by which the Truck Bill may be taken on Thursday. I am not able to bind myself to that, however.

MR. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.) asked, when will the Chancellor of the Exchequer take the Inland Revenue Bill?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): Not before Friday night.

MR. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, whether it would not be possible to take the Labourers' Allotments Bill before the Irish Votes?

MR. W. H. SMITH: I will endeavour to make the best arrangement in my power for the Allotments Bill coming on at a very early date.

MR. DILLON said, that, so far as the Irish Members were concerned, they were very willing that the Labourers' Allotments Bill should have precedence of the Irish Votes.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, what course the Government intended to take with the view of advancing the progress of the Belfast Government Bill; it was blocked by three hon. Members for Belfast; and if they were at present in the House he would ask them to remove the blocks.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.) said that, of course, as the Bill was blocked it could not be taken after half-past 12. He had no power to get the block removed, and there was no immediate chance of the pressure of other Business allowing it to be taken before half-past 12; but they would do their best to get the Bill on as soon as they could.

MR. DIXON-HARTLAND (Middlesex, Uxbridge) asked, after what hour the Post Office Savings Bank Bill would not be taken that night?

MR. W. H. SMITH: I hope there will be no objection to its being taken at any time.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

—o—

COAL MINES, &c. REGULATION BILL.—[BILL 130.]

(*Mr. Secretary Matthews, Mr. Stuart-Wortley.*)

COMMITTEE. [*Progress 15th August.*]

[FIFTH NIGHT.]

[*Fifth Night.*]

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

PART II.

General Rules.

Clause 50 (General rules).

MR. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck): In the absence of my hon. Friend the Member for Mid Durham (Mr. W. Crawford), I beg to move the Amendment which stands in his name—namely, to omit the words "so far as is reasonably practicable." The words proposed to be left out are similar to the words introduced into the Act of 1872, which led to so much contention and unpleasantness. If these words are omitted, the clause will run thus—"The following general rules shall be observed in every mine." We fear that if the words "so far as is reasonably practicable" are retained in the clause they may give rise to considerable difficulty. What might appear to be reasonable in one case might be very unreasonable in another.

Amendment proposed, in page 28, lines 25 and 26, leave out "so far as is reasonably practicable." — (*Mr. Fenwick.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): These words are contained in the Act of 1872, and, as far as I know, no difficulty has ever arisen in regard to them. I think it is hardly too much to ask for some reasonable protection against the employment of these rules with unnecessary severity.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I quite understand the motives of the hon. Member, but some words of the kind are absolutely necessary, seeing that the rules are quite imperative; and it has been laid down by the Court of Queen's Bench that they may be dispensed with in cases in which physical or engineering difficulties prevent them from being carried out. That is the only effect of the qualification. The effect of striking out the words would be to make the rules imperative without any qualification whatever; and persons disobeying them, no matter what the physical difficulties may be which prevent their being carried out, would be liable to a criminal prosecution for the non-observance of them.

MR. FENWICK: Who is to interpret the words "reasonably practicable"—who is to decide whether a particular matter is reasonably practicable or not? If it is to be left to the manager, the door will be opened to abuses which the workmen will have no means of preventing or limiting. The words are very elastic, and therefore we desire to have them expunged from the Bill.

MR. MATTHEWS: The interpreters of the rules will be the Court who would have to try a man for violating them. The hon. Member for Rhondda (Mr. W. Abraham) will probably remember the case in which a miner was tried for firing the gas in a working place, and in that case the Court took upon itself the interpretation of the rules. With such power in the hands of the Court I think the clause, with these words retained in it, will be perfectly satisfactory.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I suppose everybody is agreed that it is a fundamental principle in good administration to fix the responsibility upon someone. The right hon. Gentleman has referred to the decision of the Court of Queen's Bench; but between the Court of Queen's Bench and the manager stands first of all the Inspector, and secondly the Home Office. There is nothing here to guide a Court of Law in deciding what is or is not reasonably practicable, and the rules are left in a most indefinite manner. If the Inspector could be appealed to as to what is reasonably practicable, or if the Home Office could decide whether a manager has infringed the spirit of the rule, a considerable number of questions and matters of complaint on the part of the workmen would be got rid of. Circumstances are constantly changing in mining operations, so that it is almost impossible for the same case to occur again; and, therefore, a decision of the Court of Queen's Bench in reference to the violation of a rule in one case may not apply to a complaint of a similar violation in another. Therefore it is not unreasonable to ask that there should be some definition of what is reasonably practicable, both in the case of the miners and of the owners and managers.

Colonel BLUNDELL (Lancashire, S.W., Ince): The Inspector would interpret the act of the manager in precisely the same manner as he would interpret all other cases, and the Inspector would challenge any improper act on the part of the manager.

Mr. W. ABRAHAM (Glamorgan, Rhondda): Will the hon. and gallant Gentleman pardon me? It is altogether illusory to say that the Inspector will insist upon having the rules strictly adhered to by the manager.

Colonel BLUNDELL: I said that the Inspector would challenge the acts of the manager.

Mr. W. ABRAHAM: Then I say again that after what we heard in this House last night upon the question of inspectorship, it is impossible for the Inspector to visit each colliery even once in every 12 months; and if he does not go there how is he going to challenge the conduct of the manager, in regard to the ventilation of the mine for instance? I understand that the Home Secretary does not intend, personally, to relax these rules in any way so as to increase the danger of working the mine. It has already been pointed out that the circumstances of various collieries are very rarely the same; and, therefore, what is reasonable and practicable in one might be very unreasonable and impracticable in another. The right hon. Gentleman says that that is the reason why these words ought to be retained in the clause; but we ask who is to decide the question? The right hon. Gentleman says the Court; but the question will not be brought before the Court until some accident happens. I hope that the Home Secretary will not insist upon the retention of the words.

Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): May I point out a practical difficulty in working this provision in connection with the 21st clause, which provides that, under certain circumstances, the owner and agent of the mine shall not be liable to a fine in the event of the rules being infringed. I quite agree with the hon. Member who has just sat down, that what may be reasonably practicable in one mine may not be reasonably practicable in another. I think the matter is one which ought to be looked at very carefully, and I would suggest that some elasticity should be introduced upon this point, and that it should be left to the Inspector or the Home Secretary to determine how the rules are to be applied. Rules which may be absolutely necessary in the collieries of the North of England or Wales may be in the highest degree prejudicial in the case of the Staffordshire collieries. I would suggest that some such words as these might be introduced into the clause—"except the Home Secretary or the Inspector shall otherwise determine." I do not think that it would be right to leave the determination to the discretion of a Court of Summary Jurisdiction.

Mr. F. S. POWELL (Wigan): The language of Clause 51 is precisely the same as that of the old law, which provides that in certain cases the owner, agent, and manager shall each be guilty of an offence against the Act unless he can prove that he has taken all reasonable means to prevent the contravention or non-compliance with the rules. Unless there is some elasticity in regard to these rules I am afraid they might be made so rigid that it would be impossible to carry them out in their present form.

Mr. BURT (Morpeth): This is one of the most important, if not the most important, of the Amendments which have been placed upon the Paper. It is quite true that these words are in the existing Act, and they were put into the existing Act in substitution of other words which it was considered would be still more objectionable—namely, the words "under ordinary circumstances;" but they have always been regarded as very loose, and as greatly weakening the value of the rule. So far as I am concerned, I have invariably set my face against them. The miners, generally, are opposed to any such words, because they fear that the rules may be evaded through them. However, I have no desire to continue the discussion, and I hope that steps will be taken at once to test the feeling of the Committee on the matter.

Mr. WARMINGTON (Monmouthshire, W.): I would ask the Home Secretary whether the views which have been expressed could not be met by a Proviso at the end of the section, stating in what respect a rigid observance of the rules may be expected?

Sir JOSEPH PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): I wish to call the attention of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) to the fact that, under Clause 52, special rules are to be made for every mine. With regard to the question before the Committee, there can be no man in this House who would desire to insist upon the observance of rules that were not reasonable and practicable; but, as the words would have to be interpreted by a Court of law, the responsibility of complying with the rules would not be taken away from the owner and manager. When, however, we come to the rules themselves, and see how technical they are, and how difficult it must be under any circumstances to carry them out, I think some such words as "reasonably practicable" are absolutely required. I have invariably objected to any redundancy of expression in an Act of Parliament. But in this case these words only mean that general rules are to be observed as far as they can reasonably be observed. For instance, take the first of the rules which relates to the ventilation of the mine, and provides that—

> "An adequate amount of ventilation shall be constantly produced in every mine to dilute and render harmless noxious gases to such an extent that the working places of the shafts, levels, stables, and workings of the mine, and the travelling roads to and from those working places, shall be in a fit state for working and passing therein."

It may be very difficult to comply literally with this provision, and all the manager can do is to observe it as far as he can reasonably do so. My own opinion is that the words it is proposed to omit are far better left in the clause for the protection of the miner and the mineowner. It has already been interpreted by a Court of Law that the words "reasonably practicable" do not take away from the proper person the responsibility of carrying out the rules.

Mr. BARNES (Derbyshire, Chesterfield): There are occasions on which it is impossible to observe the rules, and if the manager is to be responsible for the working of the mine there must be some words to make the observance of the rules reasonable and practicable. If the words [are omitted a hard-and-fast rule will be made, by which it will be laid down that a man should do what he really cannot do.

Mr. PICKARD (York, W.R., Normanton): The reason why we want these words to be struck out is that the managers and the miners should be placed on an equal footing in the matter of responsibility. No such words as these have anywhere been applied to the conduct of the miners. The Bill provides that if a workman commits any offence or refuses to carry out the orders of the manager he is to be punished, and there are no words, such as "reasonable or practicable," applied to his case. What we want is that the same provision should be applied to the owner, agent, and manager as that which is applied to the miner.

Mr. HANDEL COSSHAM (Bristol, E.): These rules apply to the employers as well as to the workmen, and therefore affect both sides. It will be impossible for the manager to ask the workmen to do anything unreasonable or impracticable.

Mr. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.): May I be allowed to make a suggestion to the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary? This matter was discussed at great length last year, and what I would suggest to the right hon. Gentleman is this. The general rules are now the subject of discussion; but in the case of special rules under Clause 52 power is vested in the hands of the Inspector, and ultimately of the Secretary of State, to adopt special rules for each particular mine running with the general rules in this clause. I would suggest that the words "as far as is reasonably practicable" should be left out in Clause 50, but that they should be inserted either in Clause 51 or 52—perhaps they would be better in Section 52—giving the Secretary of State distinct power to waive the operation of the general rules in the case of particular mines where special rules are applied, and where it is not necessary or practicable to enforce the general rules. I would rather not lay down at this moment the words which suggest themselves to me, or the exact place where they should be inserted; but I think it would be better that the rules should be absolute, but that a dispensing power given to the Secretary of State in connection with the special rules, enabling him to dispense with any of the general rules in the case of a particular mine. Without some such power I think the operation of the Act would be rendered extremely difficult. It would be, of course, the distinct duty of the Secretary of State to see that when any of the general rules were qualified the qualification was a safe one. If the right hon. Gentleman will adopt the principle of my suggestion I think he will be able to get over the difficulty.

MR. TOMLINSON: The suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman would only meet one of the difficulties. There may be some one rule inapplicable to the circumstances of a particular colliery; but it might also be that a rule had become temporarily impracticable. Something, for instance, might occur to cause a temporary interruption to the ventilation of the mine, and so cause a violation of Rule 1. A case of that kind would not be met by the suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman.

MR. CHILDERS: Yes; I think it would. The Home Secretary would have power to meet a temporary case of accident of that kind. Indeed, he would be able to deal with the rules either temporarily or permanently. The more power we can throw into the hands of the Secretary of State the better.

MR. TOMLINSON: In the case mentioned by the right hon. Gentleman the action of the Secretary of State would be *ex post facto* and too late.

MR. FENWICK: What I object to is that either the manager or the workman should have the power of saying that either this or that thing is reasonable and practicable, or unreasonable and impracticable. When danger occurs or difficulties arise in any mine we have already provided a solution of the difficulty by an appeal to a Court of Arbitration. Let the arbitrator decide whether a particular thing is reasonably practicable or not. I maintain, therefore, that these words are altogether unnecessary, as you have already provided a Court of Arbitration for the solution of the difficulty.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I support the Amendment because, in the event of a prosecution being instituted, an able advocate may easily convince a magistrate, especially if he desires to be so convinced, that a matter is not reasonably practicable in a particular case, and consequently the rules would be rendered utterly valueless.

MR. MATTHEWS: I must remind the Committee that these words have already been the law since the Act of 1872.

MR. FENWICK: Much too long.

MR. MATTHEWS: Will hon. Members consider what may happen if the rules are not observed? The non-observance of any one of the rules subjects a workman or manager to a penalty. Do hon. Members wish that a man should be subjected to penalties where the thing has not been reasonably practicable, and where it has been perfectly impossible to comply with the rules? Suppose, for instance, that a steam gauge in a boiler has been broken off, or some accident of that kind has happened, and the man goes on using the boiler, although immediately the accident occurred he sent to the engineer to report it, and the engineer sent to the manufacturer to supply a new gauge. The man has done his best under the circumstances—he has reported the accident, and steps have been taken to repair the damage; but, nevertheless, he goes on working, and there is an interval. Is he, under such circumstances, to be subjected to a penalty? It is such a case as that which these words are intended to meet—namely, to prevent a man being subjected to a penalty in consequence of something having occurred which he could not help. With regard to the suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers), I should shrink very much from the responsibility he endeavours to impose upon the Home Secretary. I confess that something of the same kind did pass through my mind originally; but I think it is better to fix responsibility, as far as it can be safely fixed, upon those who are engaged in the working of the mine, and in doubtful cases to dispense with the strict observance of the rules, because it is quite evident that no general rules can be framed which would precisely fit all cases. The more I have thought upon the matter the more I have been induced to believe that there are too many general rules, and I think it would be better to cut them down, and to leave matters to the Court of Arbitration. Certainly the power of dispensing with general rules which Parliament has thought fit to enact is a power which I think any person, filling the Office of Home Secretary, would be very loth to take upon himself. No Home Secretary would be likely to possess a sufficient amount of technical knowledge to enable him to decide.

MR. BRADLAUGH: The right hon. Gentleman says that this has been the law since 1872. That is no answer to the objection which has been raised, because we are now amending the law of 1872; and the fact that these words exist in the present law should not prevent us from expunging them if they are objectionable. I am not prepared to contend that my knowledge of the law can compare with that of the right hon. Gentleman; but I would submit to him that in such a case as the Home Secretary has suggested no prosecution would be successful, because there would be a good and valid legal defence.

MR. MATTHEWS: That would not be so.

MR. BRADLAUGH: Of course, I have not the same legal experience as the right hon. Gentleman; but my opinion has frequently turned out to be correct even when pitted against that of very high legal authorities. I think that the words "reasonably practicable" would enable a clever advocate, before a favourable Bench, to evade the Act entirely.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: The right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) urges that the general rules should be subjected to special rules. I think the right hon. Gentleman has misconceived the provisions of the Bill in that respect. The special rules are first of all originated by the owner of the colliery himself. The Home Secretary might object; but, if so, he is to be guided by general rules laid down for his direction. I admit that it would be a serious thing if he were to disregard the general rules; but he can challenge the special rules submitted by the owner. The owner is not at all precluded from objecting to the action of the Home Secretary. He has a right to object, and in that case he might go to a Court of Arbitration. The Arbitrator, like the Home Secretary, might consider himself bound by the general rules. These words, and the discussion which has arisen upon them, are a proof, I think, if any were required, of the bad policy of this system of general rules altogether. On the second reading of the Bill I objected to the general rules, because I am convinced they are altogether a mistake, and that they ought not to be enacted. Everything ought to be provided in accordance with the circumstances of the particular undertaking. These general rules throw on the Home Secretary the responsibility of assenting to regulations, although they may be dangerous and difficult in regard to a particular case and a particular mine. The House has, however, decided to adopt the principle of general rules; and, under those circumstances, it seems to me only right and proper that general rules, having been decided upon, they should be distinctly binding upon all parties—that everybody should know exactly how he stands, and what amount of protection he is afforded by the Act of Parliament. The Home Secretary says that these words are in the Act of 1872; but there are many things in the Act of 1872 which since that Act passed have been found to be practically unworkable, and that is one of the reasons why this Bill has been introduced. The manager who claims the protection of these elastic words has a distinct advantage conferred upon him in the event of any infringement of the rules on his part, whereas the working miner has no such advantage. Whoever heard of such words as these being used to protect the workman from the responsibility which attaches to him for a failure to observe the regulations? In the case of defective machinery or engines, the blame falls, not on the workman, but on the manager or the under manager, who would be safe from punishment by these elastic words. But where some rule has been infringed by the miner, altogether apart from the machinery of the mine, the strict letter of the law will be applied to him, and these elastic words will be of no avail. Therefore, in general operation these general rules will be unfair, and I support the proposal to omit them because I do not think they can be equitably made use of in respect to both parties. If I thought the clause would fairly operate I should vote for the retention of these words, because I believe that, as a matter of policy, it would be right and proper for some central authority to decide whether or not it is reasonably practicable to observe a particular rule; but, at the same time, I am of opinion that that authority ought not to be the manager, and that the final Court of Appeal ought not to be the Court of Queen's Bench, but the Inspector.

Mr. ATHERLEY-JONES (Durham, N.W.): I agree with what has fallen from the Home Secretary to this extent —that some protection must be afforded in cases where it is a matter of physical impossibility to comply with the rules. I wish, however, to draw the attention of the right hon. Gentleman to the later part of Clause 51, which seems to have escaped general observation—

> "Unless he proves that he had taken all reasonable means by publishing and to the best of his power enforcing the said rules as regulations for the working of the mine, to prevent such contravention or non-compliance."

I would ask the Home Secretary whether in respect of the illustration he gave the Committee a moment ago these words would not be a sufficient protection to the mineowner; and, further, whether he does not think that they would afford sufficient protection to him in respect of matters where a physical impossibility arises on the part of the owner, agent, or manager, to carry out the rule. It, therefore, appears to me that the words "so far as is reasonably practicable" are unnecessary in this clause, and that ample protection is afforded to the mineowner by the words which are contained in the latter part of Clause 51.

Mr. MATTHEWS: The words which appear in the latter part of Clause 51 apply only to a case in which the owner, agent, or manager, is sought to be rendered liable for an offence against the rules committed without their knowledge. Hon. Members will observe that if the rules are broken or not complied with, then any person whatsoever, whether he is the owner, agent, or manager, is guilty of an offence, and is rendered liable to fine and imprisonment. This clause provides, however, that if the offence has been committed by somebody else, and that the manager has known nothing of it, and has never heard of it, he is not to be punished. It is to guard against a vicarious responsibility of that kind that these words are introduced—

> "Unless he proves that he had taken all reasonable means by publishing and to the best of his power enforcing the said rules as regulations for the working of the mine, to prevent such contravention or non-compliance."

The words which are proposed to be omitted apply to a workman just as much as to the manager or owner. The workman may be able, if he has failed to comply with one of the rules, to say that something occurred in the mine which prevented him from complying, and these words would be just as useful for his protection as for that of the manager.

Mr. WIGGIN (Staffordshire, Handsworth): Not being a lawyer, I am unable to say what the complete effect of omitting these words would be. I would, therefore, ask the right hon. Gentleman opposite whether, supposing these words are left out, and an accident occurs in a mine, the owner and manager would be held to be legally liable, notwithstanding the fact the accident was due to circumstances over which they could have no control.

Mr. MATTHEWS: If the Amendment were to be adopted I am of opinion that not only the owner and the manager, but the workman, in case of an accident, would be liable under the general provision contained in the 1st part of Section 51, which says—

> "Every person who contravenes or does not comply with any of the general rules in this Act, shall be guilty of an offence against this Act; and in the event of any contravention of or non-compliance with any of the said general rules in the case of any mine to which this Act applies, by any person whomsoever, the owner, agent, and manager shall each be guilty of an offence against this Act."

In such a case if the general rules had not been complied with the owner or manager would be guilty of an offence, although it was impossible to comply with them. Therefore, some such words as those now proposed to be left out are absolutely necessary in order to prevent such gross injustice as that provision, if left unguarded, would give rise to. These words are contained in the Act of 1872, and have been interpreted by the Courts in a way which has never led to any harm.

Mr. J. C. BOLTON (Stirling): I wish to know whether, under the general rules, in the case referred to by the Home Secretary, of the breaking of a steam gauge, the men working the boiler would not be liable as well as the master?

Mr. MATTHEWS: Yes; I should say so, inasmuch as the men would be contravening the general rules by working the boiler without the precautions required to be taken by the general rules. It would be no answer to say—"I could not help it." The answer to that would be—"You should not have continued to work the boiler."

Question put.

The Committee *divided:*—Ayes 141; Noes 96: Majority 45.—(Div. List, No. 382.)

Rule 1—Ventilation of mines.

Mr. TOMLINSON: I beg to move, in line 28, after "mine," to insert the words "while any persons are employed therein." The object of the Amendment is to provide that the ventilation of a mine shall only be compulsory while any person is employed therein, and that where, for instance, it is not worked during the night, it shall not be rendered necessary to keep up the same amount of ventilation that would be required while the pit is being worked.

Amendment proposed, in page 26, line 28, after "mine," insert "while any persons are employed therein."—(*Mr. Tomlinson.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted.

Mr. A. J. WILLIAMS (Glamorgan, S.): I confess that I do not understand the object of the hon. and learned Member in proposing the Amendment. I presume it is to be read in conjunction with some subsequent Amendment.

Mr. TOMLINSON: No; it is a substantive Amendment.

Mr. A. J. WILLIAMS: Then I hope the Government will not accept it. It certainly would be most inapplicable to some of the mines, and might lead to most mischievous consequences. Indeed, there would be the danger of bringing about spontaneous combustion in certain mines if the ventilation were slackened for a time. That, I am afraid, would be especially the case in some of the Staffordshire mines.

Mr. HINGLEY (Worcestershire, N.): In Staffordshire the seams are of two different kinds—one of them being very much broken and giving out a larger quantity of gas than the other, and it is a matter of experience that spontaneous combustion is only prevented by keeping up a proper amount of ventilation even when the miners are not at work. During the working hours, of course, the men themselves are able to keep the ventilation in order, and there is very little danger; but during the remainder of the night when they were absent there would be no means of keeping up the ventilation unless it were made compulsory upon the owner to maintain it.

Mr. P. STANHOPE (Wednesbury): The hon. Member (Mr. Hingley) has spoken as an owner of South Staffordshire collieries. Perhaps I may be allowed to say a word on behalf of the South Staffordshire miners, who consider they have good reason for believing that the slackening of the ventilation in the mine has been a frequent cause of accident. A very serious accident occurred not very long ago. The slacking of the ventilation having led to the accumulation of a considerable quantity of choke-damp, three men and an overlooker went down the mine to attend to the ventilation, got into the choke-damp, and were brought up suffocated. Such painful experience on the part of the miners of South Staffordshire is quite sufficient to show that the slackening of the ventilation at any time is a dangerous practice, and ought not to be permitted. It is for the interest of the miners as well as of the colliery owner that the ventilation should be adequately maintained, and I hope that the Committee will refuse to listen to this proposal.

Mr. STAVELEY HILL (Staffordshire, Kingswinford): I trust that the hon. Member who has just sat down will allow the Chairman of the South Staffordshire Colliery Trade (Mr. Hingley) and others who have been in Staffordshire all our lives to know as much about these matters as he does. I have taken the trouble to study this subject, and speaking not in the interest of the mineowner, but of the men themselves, I am prepared to say that unless the pits are closed over for the night it would become impossible to work them, and the consequence would be clearly as disastrous to the men as to the owners. I am quite sure that my hon. Friend and myself have the interests of the men at heart quite as much as the hon. Member, and I am prepared to maintain that this clause cannot be rendered operative unless these words are inserted in it.

MR. HINGLEY: May I explain that this matter was discussed quite recently at the conference between the masters and workmen in Staffordshire, and it was pointed out that in many of the mines there are broken seams which render it necessary to cut off the air.

MR. WIGGIN: As a representative of a large mining district in South Staffordshire, I desire, on behalf of the miners, to say a word or two in reference to this clause. I am bound to say that the information I have received from them does not accord with the views which have been expressed by my hon. Friend the Member for the Kingswinford Division of Staffordshire (Mr. Staveley Hill). I have been informed by the men—and I think it is a rational view to take—that they desire that the ventilation should be kept up during the night as well as in the daytime, so that when they go down the pit in the morning the air may be found wholesome and free from fire-damp and choke-damp. The veriest tyro must know that pure air is more likely to be found in a pit where the ventilation has been kept up during the night than if it had been stopped for several hours. I hope the Committee will not accept the Amendment.

MR. MATTHEWS: This is one of the Amendments in dealing with which I confess I have had considerable difficulty. I am altogether unwilling to put anything into a clause which is likely to be prejudicial to the interests of any class, either owners or men. On the other hand, in inserting this rule, I have not altered the clause in the Act of 1872 by a letter. The mines in South Staffordshire have gone on and flourished under this provision; and I can only ask myself why they should not go on and flourish under a similar provision in this measure. I know that the Inspectors are decidedly against the principle of stopping the ventilation. One of them tells me that in Leicestershire the mines that are liable to spontaneous combustion are among the best ventilated mines that can be found; and the Reports of the Inspectors and Examiners show that the mines of South Staffordshire must be treated in the same way. I should imagine that in any well-managed mine it would be easy to deal with all circumstances likely to occasion danger; but what is uppermost in my mind is the fact that we are not altering the existing law, and the Bill does not seek to alter it in any respect.

MR. HINGLEY: If we were left alone in the future, as we have been in the past, we should not care.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: What the Home Secretary has said is perfectly true—namely, that the wording of the clause is precisely the same as that of the Act of 1872. The Bill introduced by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) contained the words—

> "An adequate amount of ventilation shall be constantly produced by day and by night throughout the year."

Those words have been omitted, and they have evidently been omitted for some purpose, because in other respects the Bill is almost identically the same as that of the right hon. Gentleman on the Front Opposition Bench. In regard to the words "reasonably practicable," the Home Secretary told us that he had carefully considered the representations which had been made to him on the subject. Therefore, we may presume that when he consented to omit the words "constantly produced by day or night throughout the year," he also carefully considered the representations that were made to him. As those words were contained in the Bill of last year, I would ask why they have not been introduced into the present Bill? The Committee will observe that there is a very elastic adjective at the beginning of the rule—namely, the word "adequate." Now, what may be adequate when there are men working in a mine may be altogether unnecessary at night, and there may be certain conditions by which, with a strong movement of air, an accumulation of gas may be fired, with very serious consequences, and in such cases the diminution of the rush of air may not only be reasonable, but absolutely necessary. Therefore, I can quite understand the desirability of slackening the ventilation in certain cases; and the hon. and learned Member for the Kingswinford Division of Staffordshire (Mr. Staveley Hill) tells us that if these words are not introduced there are certain mines in South Staffordshire which cannot be worked at all. That, however, will be provided for, I presume, by the words we discussed some time ago—"so far as is reasonably practicable." I suppose it would be a sufficient defence for the slacking of the ventilation if it could be shown that it was absolutely necessary. I know very well what the feeling is of individuals with whom I have been in correspondence on the subject. They believe that the slackening of the ventilation at night is frequently the cause of an accumulation of fire-damp and choke-damp, which renders the working of the mine the next day very much more dangerous than it need be; and I am inclined to think that men who have to pass their lives in the daily duty of coal getting are much more trustworthy guides in this matter than anyone else can be.

Mr. TOMLINSON: After the discussion which has taken place I shall not press the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Sir JOHN SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield): I have an Amendment to move, in line 28, after the word "gases," to insert the words "and the fumes of explosives." I have had complaints from the miners and workmen in the South Staffordshire mines that they suffer from the fumes arising from the powder exploded in the mines. As the rule is drafted, it simply provides that—

> "An adequate amount of ventilation shall be constantly produced in every mine to dilute and render harmless noxious gases."

The miners of South Staffordshire have requested me to add these words, so that in future their health may not suffer from the fumes of explosives, as it has done in the past.

Amendment proposed, in page 26, line 28, after the word "gases," insert "and the fumes of explosives."—(*Sir John Swinburne.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. WIGGIN: I think the words "noxious gases" cover also the words "fumes from explosives." The fumes from explosives are certainly noxious gases, and it is, therefore, unnecessary to insert the Amendment.

Sir JOHN SWINBURNE: It is generally considered that noxious gases are gases which are generated from the coal, and not from explosives. The men who work in the mine complain very bitterly indeed of the foul air produced by these explosives. That is the view which I wish the Committee to take of the matter. Only yesterday I received a letter upon the subject, stating that at the present time the health of the miners suffers very severely from this cause—not from the noxious gases generated from the coal, but from the fumes of the explosives fired off in the mine.

Question put, and *negatived.*

Mr. DONALD CRAWFORD (Lanark, N.E.): I have now to move at the end of the rule, in line 32, to add these words—

> "And all waste places in the mine shall be either built in, drained, or so ventilated as to make it impossible for dangerous quantities of gas to accumulate."

The clause, as far as it has passed, provides for the proper ventilation of the working places; but there are also waste places in a mine where gas is liable to accumulate, which form the most fruitful source of accident. I am afraid it is a matter of considerable difficulty to secure the removal of the gas from these waste places. But we must bear in mind that the Amendment is governed by the words which were recently discussed by the Committee—namely, "reasonably practicable." I think it is desirable that the general rules should contain some special provision of this kind, so that this great source of danger may be properly dealt with.

Amendment proposed,

> In page 26, after line 28, insert "and all waste places in the mine shall either be built in, drained, or so ventilated as to make it impossible for dangerous quantities of gas to accumulate."—(*Mr. Donald Crawford.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Sir JOSEPH PEASE: I hope that my hon. Friend, whatever else he does with the Amendment, will take out of it the words "built in." Nothing could be more dangerous in a mine than to build in what may turn out to be a tank of explosive gas, which may be let out by some accident. I would point out to the hon. Member that this clause requires an adequate amount of ventilation to be provided, and it must be of such a character as to draw away the noxious gases which may accumulate in a mine, and render it liable to explosion.

Mr. BARNES: In the Midland Counties the goaves are solid goaves; and where you have a solid goaf there is no danger.

Mr. W. ABRAHAM (Glamorgan, Rhondda): If the hon. Member for North-East Lanark (Mr. Donald Crawford) means walling up, I believe that no practical man would agree with him; but if he means what is termed stowing, I shall be prepared to vote for his Amendment. I would, however, suggest to him that he should allow the Amendment to be amended so as to substitute the word "stow" for "built in."

Mr. BARNES: I do not see how that can be done.

Mr. MATTHEWS: This is a subject which I think would be better met by a special rule. It will depend very much upon the manner in which the mine is worked as to whether it is possible to do this or not. I take it that what the hon. Gentleman the Member for North-East Lanark means by the words "built in" is packing or stowing. Where it is quite possible in a large mine to pack the goaf and to keep the waste places packed up or stowed, in some of the mines in Staffordshire, which are worked on the pillar and stall principle, it would be impossible to pack. The waste places in that case must be kept open without being packed or filled in; and it is only when you are working the pillars themselves that it becomes possible to pack. The matter, however, is surrounded with difficulty, and to lay down any general rule is impracticable. I have, therefore, after turning over the subject in my mind, come to the conclusion that the best way of dealing with it is to leave it to the special rules. The decisions of the Courts have, I think, rendered any danger which might arise from the neglect of waste places less serious than it was before those decisions were given. In such cases it has been decided that not only the ventilation of the working places, but that the levels, and the travelling roads, and the waste places must be adequately ventilated so as to free them from noxious gases. As the law now stands I think there is as much in the Statutes on the subject as any general rule can meet. I would therefore suggest that the safer mode of dealing with this very difficult subject would be to leave it until we reach the special rules.

Mr. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.W.): I quite appreciate the difficulty of the right hon. Gentleman; but, after all, this is merely a question of expense. If a rule were once made it would have to be applied, and the men would have the consciousness that they are not working in constant peril of an inroad of gas. At the same time I am quite aware that in Scotland especially it has been extremely difficult to drain off the accumulations of gas.

Mr. PICKARD: I trust that my hon. Friend will allow his Amendment to be amended by leaving out the words "either built in, drained or." It will then read—"And all waste places in the mine shall be so ventilated as to make it impossible for dangerous quantities of gas to accumulate." I quite agree that it is necessary to ventilate waste places, and so to ventilate them that an accumulation of gas shall not take place.

Mr. DONALD CRAWFORD: I am well aware of the difficulties of the question, and I think they have been fairly stated by the right hon. Gentleman opposite. I also attach the greatest weight to the opinion of my hon. Friends below the Gangway, who have practical experience, which I cannot claim. I am, therefore, quite prepared to accept the Amendment suggested by the hon. Member for Glamorganshire (Mr. W. Abraham) and the hon. Member for Normanton (Mr. Pickard), if that will render the Amendment acceptable to them.

Mr. PICKARD: Then I beg to move that the Amendment be amended in the way I have suggested. The only thing we want is to prevent, as far as possible, an accumulation of gas.

Amendment amended, by leaving out the words "either be built in, drained or," and inserting the word "be,"—(*Mr. Pickard,*)—instead thereof.

Question proposed,

"That the words, 'And all waste places in the mine shall be so ventilated as to make it impossible for dangerous quantities of gas to accumulate' be there inserted."

Mr. JOICEY (Durham, Chester-le-Street): I believe that this will be found to be quite impracticable, and I hope that the Amendment will not be pressed. I feel that it would inflict great injury upon the owners.

Mr. FENWICK: The Amendment is proposed in the interest and safety of the miners, and if it is found that in carrying it out it increases the cost of getting the coal I am satisfied that the general public will be willing to pay an increased price for their coal if they are thereby assured that the lives of the miners are to some extent rendered more safe by the carrying out of the provisions of this Bill. I think the question of increased cost ought not to stand between this House and effective legislation for procuring the increased safety of life and limb to the miners. I shall therefore support the Amendment as it has been amended.

MR. MATTHEWS: I quite agree with the hon. Member that we ought not to study the question of cost in comparison with that of safety, but I would invite the attention of practical miners to this question. Can you effectually ventilate the waste places in which the roof has come down, or where you are following the pillar and stall system of working? When once the roof has come down you cannot possibly reach the gas by ventilation; but if you do not attempt to introduce air into them you will soon have an accumulation of fire-damp which it is difficult to expel, because the introduction of fresh air renders it dangerous. I would therefore ask the Committee to pause before making a general rule which would not only be impracticable, but positively dangerous in some cases.

MR. W. ABRAHAM (Glamorgan, Rhondda): I would respectfully submit that we are dealing with a most important question. I quite agree with the right hon. Gentleman that probably the best way of dealing with the subject will be by framing a special rule; but I think is is essentially necessary to say in the general rules that this must be done. Unless something of the kind is inserted in the general rules an employer may permit these large reservoirs of gas to be formed. So far as the contention goes that it is impossible to do this, I would ask what becomes of the qualification "so far as is reasonably practicable?" Will not the matter be met by that qualification that "as far as is reasonably practicable" it should be done? I quite admit that there may be a certain amount of danger, but no man would enter these holes without there was a sufficient supply of air to clean them out, and when the waste places have been stopped up, if there is the least fall of roof, the gas inside will be brought out into the fresh air. That is a thing which we ought not to permit at all, and there should be a specific provision that no reservoir of gas should be allowed to exist in any mine, but that all the waste places should be properly ventilated. I myself believe that it is necessary that some such provision as that which is proposed in this Amendment should be inserted in the general rules, but that the way of carrying it out should be left to the special rules to be made for each district. The special rules in that case would be adapted to the circumstances of the district.

SIR JOSEPH PEASE: I am of opinion that it would be perfectly impracticable to carry out the Amendment if it is passed. Anyone who knows what a large mine is knows that it is impossible to ensure a perfect ventilation of the goaf. Let me call the attention of the Committee to what they are going to enact—namely, that—

> "An adequate amount of ventilation shall be constantly produced in every mine, to dilute and render harmless noxious gases to such an extent that the working places of the shafts, levels, stables, and workings of the mine, and the travelling roads to and from those working places, shall be in a fit state for working and passing therein."

And now it is further proposed to provide that all waste places in the mine shall be so ventilated as to make it impossible for dangerous quantities of gas to accumulate. As I read the clause, we have already provided that the owner shall be bound to produce an adequate amount of ventilation in the mine, and I am quite sure it will only add to his difficulties in carrying out that rule if you are to add this Amendment.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: One of my earliest experiences down a mine was in being taken down for a considerable depth underground. Having reached the bottom, I walked for several hundred yards up an incline to one of the working places, and the miner raised his lamp above his head, when I saw a blue corona formed around it, which I understood to indicate that there was a dangerous accumulation of gas. He told me that that gas came from the goaf, and I must admit that in that particular working place I failed to see how it would be possible to ventilate it adequately. There is, however, something more important than ventilation, and that is that if these places cannot be ventilated, and the presence of this dangerous and inflammable gas cannot be prevented, then the men ought not to be exposed to danger, and the mine itself ought not to be worked. We have inserted elastic words at the beginning of the clause to provide that the general rules shall be observed "so far as is reasonably practicable." Therefore, I do not see why those who represent the coalmining interest should hesitate to submit to them.

MR. BARNES: May I point out that in the Midland Counties the goaves are solid, and there cannot be danger.

MR. PICKARD: No suggestion has been made that a solid goaf should be ventilated, but only the waste places. It is a mistake to suppose that the ordinary goaves cannot be ventilated. As a matter of fact, when they are packed, the ventilation is carried along the goaf by poking holes in the head of the packwall in the gateway, so that any gas which may percolate through the goaf towards the working face is carried away. That is the system which is followed in Yorkshire, and I think it is possible that what is done there can be done anywhere else.

Question put.

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 98; Noes 143: Majority 45.—(Div. List, No. 383). [6.35 P.M.]

Rule *agreed to*.

Rule 2.

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES: This Rule provides—

> "Where a fire is used for ventilation, the return air, unless it is free from inflammable gas, shall be carried off clear of the fire by means of a dumb drift or airway."

I move to omit the words "unless it is free from inflammable gas." This is an Amendment of a very important character, and one which I hope will meet the favourable consideration of the right hon. Gentleman opposite. Hon. Members will observe that the Rule provides that the return air shall be carried away by a dumb drift "unless it is free from inflammable gas." The reason why I desire to excise the words "unless it is free from inflammable gas" is that I am convinced it is absolutely impossible to secure that the return air passing from the mine is absolutely free from inflammable gas. Therefore, these words are dangerous words, upon which an interpretation might be placed which might be most prejudicial to the safety of those who are working the mine. I think the right hon. Gentleman will bear me out that the view of the Inspectors of Mines is that there shall not be any furnace in a pit. At the same time, we know that a large majority of pits are provided with furnaces over which the return air passes. I do not propose, because I know it would be hopeless to do so, to substitute anything for these furnaces; but, I think the Rule ought to be modified and made to apply only to mines where furnaces are now used. I know it will be said that the return air passing over the furnace secures a greater amount of ventilation. No doubt, that is true in one sense, because it causes brisker ventilation; but what I want to point out is the enormous amount of danger which arises from the return air passing over the furnace. The return air sweeps, not only the working places, but the edges of the goaf. The solid coal is continually discharging gas, and gas is constantly oozing out in larger or smaller quantities, so that by the time the return air passes over the furnace it is charged with a certain amount of gas. We have been told by a great chemist that 2½ per cent of gas mixed with coal dust is sufficient to occasion an explosion, and that an amount of gas not very much larger, without coal, will explode. I do not think that my [proposition is] at all unreasonable—namely, that—

> "Where a fire is used for ventilation, the return air shall be carried off clear of the fire by means of a dumb drift or airway."

That is to say, a chimney altogether separate from the furnace. In many of the explosions which have taken place—and hon. Members are aware how serious some of them have been in the destruction not only of property, but of life—it has been suggested that the explosion has arisen at the furnace. It may have been in certain cases that it has been so, and I think that it is a matter of vital importance to guard against such a danger. I quite admit—although I doubt the fact—that the return air passing over the furnace may secure a greater amount of ventilation by producing a brisker supply of fresh air. At the same time, owing to a variety of causes, the chances of an explosion are rendered more frequent by allowing the return air to pass over a furnace instead of carrying it away by means of a dumb drift.

Amendment proposed, in page 27, line 4, leave out "unless it is free from inflammable gas."—(*Mr. Atherley-Jones.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Rule."

Mr. TOMLINSON: I quite agree with a considerable part of what the hon. and learned Gentleman has said, and I believe that in most of the mines in Lancashire a dumb drift is used in connection with the furnace. But there are many mines where the quantity and proportion of gas are not considerable, and there is no possibility of an accident arising. Of course, all these things are carefully watched by the engineers and the Inspectors, and the Rule as it exists in the Bill, practically does the same thing as the hon. and learned Gentleman proposes to effect by his Amendment. How can anyone pretend to say that the air in a colliery is perfectly free from inflammable gas? I think it very likely that if the air in this chamber had been analyzed last year it would have been found that there was a certain portion of inflammable sewer gas in it, and yet the air is passed through a furnace near the roof. All we want to provide against is real danger, and this danger seems to me to be provided for by the Rule as it is proposed. Where the gas is so small and where it is rendered harmless by the ventilation, a furnace may be used freely; but where it exists in any quantity and is likely to do harm, I think the dumb drift ought to be obligatory.

Mr. FENWICK: If I understand the argument of the hon. Member for Preston (Mr. Tomlinson) rightly he objects to the Amendment of my hon. and learned Friend; but I confess that, as far as the argument itself went, it was in favour of the Amendment, because the hon. Member said, if I apprehend him rightly, that it is exceedingly difficult to tell when the return air is free from inflammable gas. It was the difficulty that existed in determining when the return air is free from inflammable gas which has induced my hon. and learned Friend to move the Amendment to omit the words "unless the mine is free from inflammable gas." He proposes to provide, in order to avoid all difficulty and risk, that the return air shall not pass over a furnace, but be carried away by a dumb drift.

Mr. YEO (Glamorgan, Gower): If the Amendment were intended to be prospective in its operation I would have small objection to it; but, considering the large number of collieries which are worked at the present time in connection with naked lights, it would be monstrously oppressive, I think, to compel the owners to incur a large expenditure in altering their arrangements simply for the purpose of providing dumb drifts in their collieries. I think the Amendment should be made prospective in its character, and in that case I would support it, because I believe that furnaces are objectionable, and that in laying down collieries in future it would be desirable to use dumb drifts. But to impose an obligation upon the owners of existing collieries, in order to avoid a danger which does not exist in a mine where naked lights are used, I think would be most unwise.

Mr. BURT: I intend to support this Amendment, which carries out one of the recommendations of the Royal Commission. The Commissioners were strongly of opinion that dumb drifts should be constructed; and that principle has also the support of the Inspectors of Mines.

Mr. HANDEL COSSHAM: I cannot support the Amendment, because I believe there are many cases in which it would operate unfairly. I believe there are at least 1,000 mines in which there is no danger at all, and it would be ridiculous to enforce this rule in them.

Mr. BROADHURST (Nottingham, W.): I think the Home Secretary will find, on referring to the Bill of last Session, that what is provided for by this Amendment was then proposed. I hope the Government will accept the Amendment, as it will greatly facilitate the progress of the Bill.

Mr. MATTHEWS: I think this Amendment ought to be made prospective only, otherwise it might impose a heavy burden upon a depressed industry, which it is desirable to avoid doing unless it is absolutely necessary. I am not aware that any accident has ever arisen in consequence of the return air not being perfectly pure. I think, on the Report, the clause might be so framed as to make the Amendment prospective only in its operation.

SIR JOSEPH PEASE: I wish to point out that if the return air is free from inflammable gas the plan suggested is a very bad way of dealing with the matter. If it is necessary to make this alteration I think it ought to be done in a more economical manner.

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES: I perfectly recognize the hardship which my hon. Friend has pointed out—namely, that of making it, in all cases, incumbent on the owner to put a dumb drift; but, I think, prospectively there ought always to be a dumb drift. I think there might be some limiting words such as proposed by the Home Secretary, which would more happily carry out the object in view, such as that—"unless the Inspector certified that a dumb drift is not necessary."

MR. MATTHEWS: I suggested prospectively that the return air, in all cases, should be carried away by a dumb drift.

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES: I want also a further addition to the clause—namely, that in collieries where there is, in the opinion of the Inspector, danger from air passing over the furnace, there a dumb drift shall also be required. I do not wish to put any burdens upon coalowners for frivolous reasons; but where there is any real appreciable danger to human life, I think, whatever the cause may be, this precaution should be taken. I therefore ask the right hon. Gentleman to accept the limiting words which I suggest.

MR. MATTHEWS: That would be done under Clause 43.

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES: The right hon. Gentleman thinks that this is effectively provided for under Clause 43; but I have grave doubts about that, owing to the recent decision of the Court of Appeal that no arbitrator has power to compel any particular thing to be done, and that all he has to do is to see that there shall be absolute safety. I shall be prepared to accept words to limit my Amendment to prospective mines, and will therefore ask leave to withdraw my Amendment, with a view of making it prospective.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Rule *agreed to.*

Rule 3 *agreed to.*

Rule 4—Stations and inspection of conditions as to ventilation, &c.

On the Motion of MR. FENWICK, Amendment made, in page 27, line 14, after "persons," by inserting "not being contractors."

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: The Amendment which I to rise to move is to add, after the word "appointed," in line 14, the words "in writing." I move this Amendment in order to secure the principle to which I have referred earlier in the evening—namely, that you should have clearly traceable responsibility at every stage of the administration of this industry. If the owner appoints a person for an important duty such as is imposed by this clause, it is only reasonable that he should appoint such persons by writing under his hand. This would fix the responsibility upon the person appointed, and also fix the responsibility of the owner of the mine.

Amendment proposed, in page 27, line 14, after "appointed," insert "in writing."—(*Mr. Arthur O'Connor.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

SIR JOSEPH PEASE: I wish to point out that the practical working of this Amendment would be very difficult. In many collieries there are 15, 20, or 25 men, who are appointed daily to inspect the far off workings of the mine. These men are generally taken from the ranks. The hon. Member proposes that before these men go their rounds they shall all be appointed in writing. I need hardly point out that this would entail much more work than is necessary. The men are well known, and perfectly conversant with the mines, and their responsibility easily traced without putting the owner to the trouble of making the appointment in writing.

Question put, and *negatived.*

MR. BURT: The next Amendment which stands in my name is connected with that which follows it, and the object of it is to make it imperative that a long time shall not elapse between the men going into the pit and the examination of the working place by the person deputed and the firemen. The interval

I propose is really a very wide one; it ought to be enough for the purpose, and it is more than is usual in many instances; but we have had cases in which intervals of four, five, and even six hours have elapsed, and that is utterly out of all reason, having regard to the danger which may exist. I rely upon the reasonableness of this Amendment, and I trust that the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary will accept it.

Amendment proposed, in page 27, line 15, to leave out "within such time before the commencement of each shift, as shall be fixed by special rules made under this Act."—(*Mr. Burt.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

Mr. MATTHEWS: I can assure the hon. Member for Morpeth that it is my earnest desire to insist on inspection immediately before the change is made. When I came to consider the matter I was told that the conditions vary so much in different mines that no time should be fixed. The hon. Gentleman suggests that we should put in the words "not exceeding two hours," so that he leaves it possible to extend to two hours the period which in some mines is only half-an-hour. I think it would be better to leave something to the discretion of the manager in this matter. I have no objection to put in such words as "within such time immediately before the commencement of the shift," or "shortest possible time." The intention was to fix the time according to the size of the mine.

Question put, and *negatived.*

Amendment proposed, in page 27, line 15, after "shall," insert "immediately."—(*Mr. Matthews.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'immediately' be there inserted."

Mr. BROADHURST: I wish to point out to the Committee that this very subject received careful and long consideration at the hands of my right hon. Friend the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) last year, and after that most careful consideration it was decided that the words which the right hon. Gentleman has now adopted would meet everything that was desired under the circumstances.

Mr. W. ABRAHAM (Glamorgan, Rhondda): I do not wish to prolong the discussion of this question, especially after the small concession which has been made by the right hon. Gentleman. But I again endeavour to impress on the mind of the Home Secretary the importance of this question, and to point out that unless the limit is made which my hon. Friend has suggested, it cannot be said that the examination is made immediately.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

On the Motion of Mr. A. J. Williams, Amendment made, in page 27, line 20, after "as" and before "ventilation" insert "the presence of gas."

Mr. A. J. WILLIAMS (Glamorgan, S.): I rise to propose that we should insert in line 21 that the examination for the purpose of ascertaining whether gas is present in the mine shall, if the Inspector requires it, be made by means of indicators to be approved by him. Perhaps the Committee will wish to hear from me some explanation of the term "indicator" in this connection. I will endeavour to explain what is the object of my Amendment. In the course of the inquiry by the Royal Commission which was appointed to consider whether the resources of science would protect colliers against accident in mines—on which Commission I had the honour and privilege of being secretary—it was made part of the inquiry to deal with the question of coal dust, which is one of great importance with reference to the dangers in coal mines. They discovered, and made quite sure, that the presence of a very small volume of inflammable gas in a mine might be a source of serious danger where the mine was dry and dusty. A volume probably as low as 1½ or 2 per cent, it was conclusively proved, might be the cause of a serious explosion. The Commissioners examined a multitude of inventions presented to them for the purpose of indicating the presence of gas, and they ascertained that one apparatus determined with the greatest accuracy and simplicity of action the presence of a very small proportion of gas—namely, ¼ per cent. I wish it to be brought before the Committee that there is a method of indicating the presence of gas in these small proportions, and having regard to the danger consequent upon their presence in the roadways in dry and dusty mines, I think it right that it should be left to the Inspector to decide in particular collieries that some indicator should be used. Having pointed out the simple means by which the presence of very small but dangerous quantities of gas may be indicated, I will leave the Amendment which I beg to move in the hands of the Government.

Amendment proposed,

In page 27, line 21, after "concerned," insert "the examination for the purpose of ascertaining whether gas is present in the mine shall, if the Inspector requires it, be made by means of indicators to be approved of by him."—(*Mr. A. J. Williams.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. MATTHEWS: No doubt, the Commission to which the hon. Gentleman has referred has thrown a great deal of valuable light on the subject of the presence of gas in mines. I am bound to say, however, that as far as my information goes the Inspectors do not know of any indicator that is trustworthy in the hands of all who may use it. Therefore I am unable to say that I can look with favour on the language of this Amendment. It is the business of the managers of the mines to do what is necessary in this matter; and although I agree that they should be made responsible for not taking proper precautions, I do not think it desirable that the particular method of doing so should be laid down here.

Mr. A. J. WILLIAMS: I feel the force of what the right hon. Gentleman has said, and am disposed to be satisfied with having brought this subject forward. The right hon. Gentleman tells us that the instrument I have referred to has not at present been found to answer; but I think it only fair to the Commissioners to say that to my knowledge a large number of experiments were made, in mines and elsewhere, with this indicator, which on those occasions certainly performed accurately.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I desire by the Amendment I am about to move that the Report required to be made by this rule with regard to the presence of noxious or inflammable gas, and which is to be recorded in a book for the inspection of the workmen, shall be not only signed by, but be in the handwriting of the person making the Report. The reason why I wish this is because I believe that the necessity of making the Report in that way will necessitate a certain amount of care and deliberation which would not be the case with a mere signature. I recollect some years ago, at a meeting, seeing an auditor's report produced; it was a very suspicious document and I desired to inspect it. I found that the signatures at the bottom of the Report were in the handwriting of the auditors; but that the body of the Report was in the handwriting of the clerk, and, of course, we were not able to appreciate what was the value of the signatures. Now, the same sort of thing may occur in coal mines. I do not mean to say there would be anything improper in a Report to be signed by the person who makes the inspection; but I say that those on whom the responsibility of making the Reports lies should be obliged to fill it up altogether, in order that they may realize the importance of making it. As it is upon the presence, or otherwise of noxious or imflammable gas in mines that the lives of the men depends, I think it is not unreasonable to ask that the Reports on this should be altogether in the handwriting of the person who makes the Report.

Amendment proposed, in page 27, line 33, leave out "signed by," and insert, "in the handwriting of."—(*Mr. Arthur O'Connor.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

Mr. BURT was understood to say that he should support the Amendment of the hon. Member for East Donegal.

Mr. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM: As the next Amendments which stand in my name are of similar importance to that which has been moved by the hon. Member for East Donegal, it will save time if in support of that hon. Member I say now that the making and posting up a true copy of the Report is calculated to allay the fears of the men.

Mr. W. ABRAHAM (Glamorgan Rhondda): I hope the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary will accept this Amendment. If it should be necessary we can give cases proving the necessity of these Reports being made in the handwriting of the men. The right hon. Gentleman may possibly remember a case tried four years ago at Swansea, in which it was proved that the Report after it was taken from the man was not exactly falsified, but that large portions of the true Report had been left out. I believe that the man employed ought to be able to make the Report in his own handwriting, and I submit that it would be hardly safe to trust to these Reports unless the responsibility of making them is brought home to the individual by their being required to be in his own handwriting. I hope my hon. Friend will divide the Committee on his Amendment unless we have a satisfactory reply from the right hon. Gentleman.

Mr. BARNES: I think the Amendment of the hon. Member for East Donegal is likely to defeat the object he has in view. These Reports are made on printed forms, which materially assists in the making and understanding of the Report. These forms have been sanctioned as being the best means of getting a true Report of the facts, and I think the hon. Member will do well not to press his Admendment to a Division.

Mr. MATTHEWS: I hope the hon. Member for East Donegal does not want to interfere with so useful a practice as that which at present exists. If I am correct in understanding the hon. Gentleman to desire that the answers in the columns of the forms now used should be in the handwriting of the person who makes the Report, I am quite willing to agree to his proposal. The only reason why I object to the whole of the Report being required to be in the handwriting of the men is that education among the mining class is not so far advanced as to insure that the Reports can be properly made in the handwriting of all the men, and that if the hon. Gentleman's Amendment were inserted, it might lead to many good workmen being thrown out of employment. I give the Committee the testimony which I have received from the Home Office Inspectors, which is opposed to the principle of enforcing written Reports by men of this class. It may be in a few years hence that the schoolmaster will be more abroad among miners, and then the difficulty which I now urge will not exist. I hope the hon. Member will not think it necessary to press an Amendment which, if it were agreed to, might have the effect of throwing a number of men out of employment.

Sir JOSEPH PEASE: If this Amendment is to be carried, I think some words will have to be added, so as not to do away with the printed forms which the hon. Member for Derbyshire (Mr. Barnes) has referred to. I am told there would be a considerable waste of time by this arrangement. From what I have seen latterly, I should not have thought there were many men who could not write, but it may be the case that some of them are in that position. Certainly on Report, some words would have to be inserted to obviate the forms which are now printed being written out.

Mr. WARMINGTON (Monmouth, W.): I suggest that the Amendment should say that, so far as the Report shall not consist of printed matter, it shall be in the handwriting of the person who signs it.

Mr. A. J. WILLIAMS: I may point out that I have known managers in some difficulty with regard to writing their names.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I shall be glad to accept the Amendment proposed to be substituted by the hon. Member for Monmouth for that before the Committee.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Amendment proposed, in page 27, line 33, leave out "each," and insert "such."—(*Mr. Warmington*).

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause," put, and *agreed to.*

Amendment proposed,

In page 27, line 34, after "by" insert "and so far as the Report does not consist of printed matter shall be in the handwriting of."—(*Mr. Warmington*).

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. TOMLINSON: I cannot help thinking that it is a great deal too much to ask that all these Reports should be written out by the persons who sign them.

An hon. Member: I think the proposal is a very reasonable one; but that provision ought to be made to meet the case of men who have not sufficient education to write out their Reports.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM: The two Amendments in my name have been transposed, I therefore rise to move the second Amendment, the object of which is to provide that the inspection shall be made by a properly qualified person. I desire by the addition of these words to tranquillize the minds of men who may think the mine in which they are working is in a dangerous condition. The words I propose to add are, "and who shall be the holder of a third-class certificate under this Act."

THE CHAIRMAN: That question has already been dealt with on the Amendment proposed to line 14.

MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM: Then, Sir, I will move the next Amendment, which it will be necessary for me at all hazards to carry to a Division. It provides that a copy of the Report shall be posted up at the entrance to the mine, or at the station underground for the inspection of the men. This Amendment is urged by the mining population of Scotland, to test the opinion of the House of Commons on the question, and having said that it is not necessary for me further to detain the Committee.

Amendment proposed,

In page 27, line 33, after the word "inspection," to insert the words "and a true copy, signed by that person, shall be posted up at the entrance to the mine, or at the station underground, for inspection by the workmen."—(*Mr. Cunninghame Graham*).

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. MATTHEWS: I think if the hon. Member will follow out the effect of his own Amendment, he will see how difficult it is to make it conform with the scheme of Rule 4. When the Inspector has concluded his inspection he will return and tell the men that all is right, and that they can go on with their work. He then goes to the office and writes out his Report, and that Report is recorded in a book. I do not see that the posting of a copy of the Report would serve any good purpose after the Inspector has sent the men to work.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I think there must be some mistake. I have seen the Inspectors writing out their Reports down below.

MR. MATTHEWS: That may be so, but they are not required to write out their Reports below. The scheme of the rule is that the Inspector, having made his inspection below, should start the workmen at their work, and then go up and record his inspection in the book in the office. It is proposed by the hon. Member that the book should be copied, and the true copy posted up at the entrance of the mine or at the stations. That copy is to be for the inspection of the workmen before they go to work, according to the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman, but I point out that under the rule they will already have been sometime at their work.

MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM: The right hon. Gentleman does not appear to me to apprehend the spirit of the Amendment. It is not that the workmen should see the copy of the Report before they go to work, but that any workman about the mine should go and look at the Report for their own satisfaction. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will remember that with the miners this is a question of life or death.

MR. W. ABRAHAM (Glamorgan, Rhondda): It would have helped the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary if he had paid a visit to some of our large collieries in the Rhondda Valley, and seen the large room provided for the firemen, and the books that are now kept. My hon. Friend only asks that what the best managers do at present should be done universally. The right hon. Gentleman would find on inquiry that what is now asked for is already done in the best regulated collieries.

SIR JOSEPH PEASE: I think that if this rule were made it would be fatal to the plan adopted in the best mining system in England—that is to say, the system which exists in Northumberland and Durham. We take the responsibility of setting up timber all over the mine on the report of the persons who inspect the workings. The man who inspects goes back and sets up the timber under the present system, but instead of doing that under this proposal he would have to go away and write out a copy of his Report to be placed at the entrance of the mine. The Reports have to be posted into a book which is accessible to the men, who are not allowed to go into any part of the mine which has not been inspected if there is any danger, and I cannot see the practical advantage of taking men away from their duty for the purpose proposed by the hon. Member for Lanark. I think there would be more danger from the absence of timber than advantage to be gained by accepting the hon. Member's Amendment.

Question put,

The Committee *divided:*—Ayes 72; Noes 120: Majority 48.—(Div. List., No. 384.) [7.50 P.M.]

Mr. WOODALL (Hanley): As I understand it, the rule, as it now stands, will allow any number of shifts succeeding each other in unbroken continuity to count as one shift. I have no desire, by the Amendment I propose, to interfere with the general principle, which is that in the event of an interval occurring between the shifts there shall be a fresh inspection; but I am told that in my own district a change of workmen does involve some interval—a very slight one, but still an interval—and that great inconvenience would result by a strict literal interpretation of the rule. I wish, however, to put myself very frankly in the hands of the Committee, and to say that, having explained the purpose of the Amendment, I shall be very glad indeed if any other way of meeting the objection can be suggested. My own impression is that the rule should read—"for the purpose of the foregoing provisions of this rule two shifts succeeding one another, with an interval not exceeding an hour, shall be deemed as one shift." A shorter period than an hour, however, would quite satisfy the purposes of my constituents.

Amendment proposed, in page 27, line 35, leave out "without," and insert "with an interval of not more than one hour."—(*Mr. Woodall.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'without' stand part of the Clause."

Mr. MATTHEWS: I am sorry I am not able to accept this Amendment. The hon. Member will see that the clause now requires an inspection before the shift and during the shift.

Mr. WOODALL: Provision has already been made, I gather, for the continuous ventilation of the mine during these possible intervals. The whole difference is between the practice in some parts of the country, where I understand that men descend and actually replace other men; and cases like those which prevail in North Staffordshire, where one set of men are brought up, and another set taken down. The interval is at least within the hour asked for, and I am quite willing, if the right hon. Gentleman thinks there is anything in my contention and will meet the difficulty I put forward, to accept a much shorter time than an hour.

Mr. BARNES: If there is an interval there must bs a period of danger.

Mr. WOODALL: As my Amendment does not appear to meet with support, I beg to ask leave to withdraw it.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Rule *agreed to.*

Rule 5—Inspection of machinery, &c., above and below ground.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I propose to move the insertion of the words "in writing" after the word "appointed," in line 5, page 28, so that a competent person, or competent persons appointed by the owner, agent, or manager for the purpose of inspecting the machinery above and below ground shall be appointed in writing. I move this with the object of fixing the responsibility upon the agent and principal alike. The Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) contains a similar provision to that I propose. Whatever objection there may have been to the appointment in writing of the man whose duty it was to inspect the condition of the strata and the atmosphere, I do not think any objection can hold good to the proposal that the appointment of a person or persons charged with the inspection of the machinery of a colliery shall be made in writing.

Amendment proposed, in page 28, line 5, after "appointed," insert "in writing."—(*Mr. Arthur O'Connor.*)

Question, "That those words be there inserted," put, and *negatived.*

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I now beg to move the insertion, in line 8, of certain words which appear to me to have been omitted possibly by accident. The words in the present Bill are almost identical with those of the Bill of last year, but the words "working places, levels, and plains" are omitted. I can only conceive that they have been inadvertently overlooked. The duty of an Inspector of machinery is to examine the state of the external parts of the machinery, the state of the head gear, ropes, chains, and other works of the mine which are in actual use both above and below ground. The Return of accidents happening in mines which is annually laid before Parliament, shows that a very considerable number of accidents happen to men not only in working places, but also on levels and plains where there is machinery in use; and, under these circumstances, I presume the Government cannot possibly object to the insertion of the words which I have quoted, and which were included in the previous Bill of last year.

Amendment proposed, in page 28, line 8, after "gear," insert "working places, levels, plains."—(*Mr. Arthur O'Connor.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. MATTHEWS: Rule 4 deals with the general inspection of the workings, but Rule 5 is confined to an inspection of the external parts of the machinery, head gear, &c.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: Machinery at large.

MR. MATTHEWS: All the external parts of the machinery, and the state of the head gear, ropes, chains, and other works of the mine which are in actual use, both above ground and below ground. The working places are dealt with by Rule 4. I cannot pretend to recollect everything in the draft Bill of last year, but I thought that the words we framed covered everything.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I see the distinction the right hon. Gentleman is endeavouring to draw, but it is a distinction for which there is no solid ground. The marginal notes show clearly the real difference between the two rules. The marginal note to Rule 4 is—"Stations, and inspection of condition as to ventilation, &c.," and the marginal note to Rule 5 is—"Inspection of machinery, &c., above and below ground." This rule, therefore, applies to machinery in general, whether it be above or whether it be below ground. The duty of the person appointed to inspect under Rule 4 is to inspect as regards the condition of the atmosphere in reference to the presence or absence of inflammatory or noxious gas, and also as to the condition of the strata wherever the super-incumbent roof or the strata is being cut through. In connection with that the Inspector is to examine the condition of the boarding and the timbering, but he is not charged with the duty of inspecting the machinery. It is perfectly obvious to anyone reading Rule 5 that it is not merely the machinery at the shaft which is to be inspected, but such things as ropes, and chains, and other works. Well, but you have works in the plains and levels, there are other things besides ropes and chains there. There are the levels themselves, and if there is an imperfect level which precipitates the tram or tub very violently at a particular point you may have a boy or man at that particular place injured. As I said before, the Report of accidents shows the importance of an inspection of machinery at both the levels and the plains, and it appears to me very clear that the words I propose to insert here have been omitted by those who drafted the Bill purely accidentally. The right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary takes credit for deliberation in the matter, and he has very ingeniously suggested an objection to my Amendment.

MR. F. S. POWELL: I hope the Committee will allow me to suggest that our proceedings will not be shortened if we are to have as we go on a comparison between the Bill of last year and the Bill now before us. We have got enough to do in dealing with the print in our hands, and in comparing it with the actual legislation of 1872, which I quite admit is a fair subject for comment and comparison. If we are to compare by running comments this Bill with the draft Bill of last year, I fear our discussions will never come to a termination within a reasonable time.

MR. HANDEL COSSHAM: My hon. Friend (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) has forgotten one thing. The man who is to inspect the machinery is to be a man who understands machinery, and he may know nothing more about underground places and levels than some of us in this House do. Rule 5 provides for the inspection of machinery, while Rule 4 provides for the inspection underground. I do not think it would be well to confuse the two inspections.

Question put, and *negatived.*

On the Motion of Mr. Tomlinson, Amendment made in page 28, Rule 5, line 9, by leaving out "works," and inserting "similar appliances."

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I beg to move the omission of the word "week," in line 11, and the insertion of the words "twenty-four hours." This Amendment is to provide that an examination of the shafts by which persons ascend and descend shall be made every 24 hours. I suppose the great body of the miners, not only in England, but in Scotland, if polled, would almost to a man vote for this Amendment. It is of immense importance that the shaft of all places should be safe and known to be safe. Now, though the comparison with the Bill of last year appears to be so obnoxious to hon. Gentlemen opposite, let me point out that in that Bill a daily inspection was provided for. In this Bill it is proposed that an examination of the state of the shafts shall be made once in every seven days. I beg to move this Amendment, making the Bill in this respect, similar to the Bill of last year.

Amendment proposed, in page 28, line 11, leave out "week," and insert "twenty-four hours." — (*Mr. Arthur O' Connor.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'week' stand part of the Clause."

Mr. BARNES: I object to this Amendment on the ground that it is altogether unnecessary. Every shaft is now properly and regularly examined. No one can be expected to examine every day a shaft which is not in work.

Sir JOSEPH PEASE: I think this would be a very difficult Amendment to carry out. In the case of a long shaft, a proper examination often occupies three or four hours. At all good collieries the shaft is examined thoroughly and well at least once a-week. An examination every 24 hours could not possibly be nearly so thorough as that which now takes place, say, upon a Saturday.

Mr. FENWICK: If my hon. Friend the Member for East Donegal (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) will confine the inspection every 24 hours to the guides or conductors of the shaft in which the cage is run, I shall be disposed to support his Amendment, and in that shape the Amendment would be one which the Home Secretary might very fairly accept.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I should be very happy to accept the suggestion of my hon. Friend (Mr. Fenwick), and I suppose the Government will consent to an examination of the guides and conductors every 24 hours, and of the shaft once a-week.

Mr. FENWICK: The guides and conductors of shafts are most important, and they ought to be fairly examined every 24 hours. Certainly seven days is too long for guides and conductors to go unexamined. I hope that in face of the reasonableness of this Amendment the Government will accept it.

Mr. MATTHEWS: I have no objection to the Amendment as amended. The clause will then read "head gear, ropes, chains, guides and conductors."

The CHAIRMAN: The Amendment cannot be made now.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): We will propose the Amendment upon Report.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Rule *agreed to.*

Rule 6—Fencing of entrances.

Mr. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith): I beg to move the Amendment which stands in my name. I confess I do not see much difference between the words "in actual course of working" and "in actual use or course of working," but I am informed by managers of collieries that they attach some importance to the Amendment, and I therefore beg to move it.

Amendment proposed, in page 28, line 17, after "actual," insert "use or."—(*Mr. J. W. Lowther.*)

Question, "That those words be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

Rule *agreed to.*

Rule 7—Withdrawal of workmen in case of danger.

Rule *agreed to.*

Rule 8—Use of safety lamps in certain places.

Captain HEATHCOTE (Staffordshire, N.W.): I beg to move the insertion of the words "being the property of and being provided by the mineowner," after the words "safety lamps," in line 38. I am quite aware that at present in every well-conducted colliery the lamps used are the property of the owner of the mine, but there are other collieries not so well conducted in which the men employed find their own lamps. In my own constituency there has been a case known of a man who bought his lamp from a rag and bone shop. I think it is very desirable that it should be made clear that such a practice cannot be. It should be distinctly understood that the responsibility for the lamps being in good order rests upon the owner.

Amendment proposed, in page 28, line 38, after "lamp," insert "being the property of and being provided by the mineowner."—(*Captain Heathcote.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. COGHILL (Newcastle-under-Lyme): I think the suggestion of the hon. and gallant Gentleman is a very valuable one, but that some other words are necessary besides those he proposes. One colliery might supply one sort of lamp—an inefficient lamp—while another colliery might supply an infallible one. I think every endeavour ought to be made to secure that only those lamps are used which keep out the inflammable gases.

Mr. MATTHEWS: This is a complicated subject, and it is really impossible for me to deal with Amendments which are not on the Paper. It is questionable, too, whether such an Amendment really can be proposed upon this Rule.

Mr. COGHILL: It would certainly come under Rule 9, which deals with the construction of safety lamps.

Mr. MATTHEWS: Yes; Rule 9 would be a more suitable place for the Amendment.

Captain HEATHCOTE: I shall be very glad to bring the matter up on Report.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Mr. W. ABRAHAM (Glamorgan, Rhondda): In the absence of my hon. Friend the Member for the Rushcliffe Division of Nottingham (Mr. J. E. Ellis), I beg to propose the omission of Rule 8 and the insertion of the following Rule:—

"In all dry mines where the air may be laden with coal dust, and where fire-damp is either known to be given off from the strata, or may from experience be reasonably suspected to exist, the Secretary of State may require safety lamps to be used, unless the owners and workmen of such mines prove to the satisfaction of a court of arbitration, to be appointed by the respective parties, that less liability to accident generally will be involved by the working of the mine with open lights than by the use of safety lamps. It shall be a special instruction to such court that the circumstances of each mine be taken into consideration with respect to the following points:—

(a.) The mode of working;

(b.) The nature of the coal seams, and of the roof and floors of the seams, and of the adjacent strata;

(c.) The proximity of the seams to each other;

(d.) The emissions of gas from the seam, and the liability to blowers or outbursts of gas from the coal roof or floor;

(e.) The order of working the seams."

The CHAIRMAN: It is evident this is not the proper place to introduce these words. This is a Rule which provides a new method of guarding against a supposed danger from the use of other lamps than safety lamps.

Mr. BURT: Can this be moved afterwards as a new clause?

The CHAIRMAN: If Rule 8 is struck out altogether, there is no doubt these words may be moved as a new clause. The hon. Member may, no doubt, propose to strike out Rule 8 altogether.

Mr. W. ABRAHAM: Then I beg to move the omission of Rule 8.

Amendment proposed, in page 28, to omit Rule 8.—(*Mr. W. Abraham.*)

Question proposed, "That the Rule 8 stand part of the Clause."

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: This Rule 8 in the present Bill is, I think, founded upon a clause in the Bill I introduced two years ago; but I must say I prefer the wording of my own clause, which seems to effect the purpose just as well as this Rule. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) inserted in his Bill a Rule to the effect that in a seam or mine in which inflammable gas was found, no lamp or light other than a locked safety lamp should be used. In the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman it was provided that three months should be the period within which any report of the presence of inflammable gas should preclude the use of any but safety lamps; but, in the present case, we have a strange departure from that provision, for the period of three months is altogether discarded. The past career of the mine does not appear to be necessary to be taken into account; it is now laid down that—

> "In any place in a mine in which there is likely to be any such quantity of inflammable gas as to render the use of naked lights dangerous,"

no lamp or light other than a locked safety lamp shall be allowed to be used. Why is this provided in this way, and why is the period of three months eliminated altogether from the Bill?

Mr. A. J. WILLIAMS: If we strike out Rule 8 and insert these words as a new clause I am afraid we shall be landed in a great difficulty. I think it should be clearly laid down in this clause that any question as to whether safety lamps ought to be used or not should be referred to arbitration, as suggested by the Commission. If it is decided that this new clause should be inserted, some change ought to be made to meet the case of mines which are dry and combustible.

Mr. MATTHEWS: I found it simply impossible to lay down any Rule to suit all mines. Therefore, I deliberately meant to leave the matter to be dealt with by a special Rule to be afterwards inserted. I tried in vain to frame some words which would be fairly applicable to all mines. I could not find any but these rather colourless words. I found, upon consultation with several Inspectors, that no set of words I could find would meet the exigencies of all cases. I think it is as well that each mine should be allowed to decide what sort of safety lamp it will use.

Mr. A. J. WILLIAMS: I quite appreciate the difficulty; it is a very great difficulty. If you do leave it open to fair arbitration, when the Inspector says—"I think a safety lamp ought to be used in this mine," it may be well worthy of consideration whether the suggestion made by the Commissioners should be adopted in terms.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Colonel BLUNDELL (Lancashire, S.W., Ince): I beg to propose the Amendment which stands in my name, the object of which is to give effect to the opinion expressed by the Commissioners who reported on accidents in mines. The Royal Commission condemned the system of working with mixed lights, for which system, they said, there was no justification.

Amendment proposed,

> In page 28, line 44, after Sub-section (b), insert—"(c) And when it is necessary to work the coal in any ventilating district with safety lamps, it shall not be allowable to work the coal with naked lights in another part of the same ventilating district."—(*Colonel Blundell.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. MATTHEWS: I think this is a valuable Amendment; but I suggest to my hon. and gallant Friend (Colonel Blundell) that the phraseology might be improved. He says—"And when it is necessary to work the coal in any ventilating district with safety lamps." Would it not be better to say—"In any place or any part of the ventilating district?" Would it not do to say—

> "It shall not be allowable to work the coal with naked lights in any part of the ventilating district, in some part of which safely lamps are required."

Sir JOSEPH PEASE: Before the hon. and gallant Gentleman assents to the proposed Amendment to his Amendment, I should like to suggest another alteration of it. In the Bishop Auckland district they sometimes work with safety lamps where there is a hitch or fear of gas, or where there is some trouble. I should not at all object to this Amendment, provided my hon. and gallant Friend would allow me to insert at the end words, so that the Amendment would read—

> "It shall not be allowable to work the coal with naked lights in any part of the ventilating district situated between the place where such lamps are being used and the return airway."

I think that, if the additional words were agreed to, the views of my hon. and gallant Friend would be carried out, and the difficulty I see to prohibiting the use of other lamps would be met.

Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment, to add at the end the words "situated between the place where such lamps are being used and the return airway"—(*Sir Joseph Pease.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

COLONEL BLUNDELL: In deference to the superior knowledge of the hon. Baronet, I beg to accept his Amendment.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Question, "That the Amendment, as amended, be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

Rule *agreed to.*

Rule 9—Construction of safety lamps.

MR. A. J. WILLIAMS: I beg to move the Amendment which stands in my name. With reference to the last clause, which refers to the appointment of official assessors, there is some doubt whether these assessors will ever be appointed; but if my Amendment is accepted, I would propose that the question be referred to arbitration in the usual way. I attach considerable importance to this Amendment; it has a most serious bearing upon the very question of the safety of colliers. I do not desire to occupy the time of the Committee unduly, yet it is very difficult to put forward arguments in favour of this Amendment without going into the matter at some length. Let me direct the attention of the Committee to the work done in this particular direction by the Royal Commission. That Commission sat for seven years, and for six years they were engaged in the most careful and elaborate examination of the whole question of safety lamps. They made 1,700 experiments; they tried 253 lamps; and during the whole of these years almost every day brought up some new invention. The Commission presented a series of recommendations with reference to safety lamps. If the work of the Royal Commission is to be of any value whatever, some such clause as this ought to be adopted. If it is not adopted the responsibility must rest upon the shoulders of the Government. It is true that the Commission, in their Report, after summing up the results of all these elaborate investigations upon the subject, pointed to four lamps as deserving of attention; but they also said—and it is clear to anyone who gives any attention to the Report, and to that thoroughly exhaustive analysis of the different kinds of safety lamps—that the responsible authorities can find 20 or 30 lamps which have been submitted to test, and which may be thought thoroughly safe for all practical purposes. It is very clear, from the whole of the experiments conducted by the Commissioners, that a large number of lamps which are supposed to be safety lamps, and which have been used as safety lamps in the collieries of this Kingdom, are at this moment perfectly untrustworthy—are, indeed traps. They are even worse than that. The Commissioners had not been long at work before they found that some lamps made in America were largely employed in the country, and were absolutely as dangerous as naked lights, and in some respects more dangerous. Surely if the work of the Commission which has been of such importance is to be of any value whatever, some clause should be inserted in this Bill, making it sure that some responsible person shall see that proper safety lamps are used. The Commissioners, without recommending any particular kind of lamp or class of lamp, say that some responsible authority ought to be appointed to see that the lamps which are used are safety lamps in fact. To make the use of a particular lamp compulsory would be unwise; but the Commissioners say—

> "We think it desirable some control should be exercised in reference to the description of lamps employed in coal mines, and that only those lamps should be used which are authorized from time to time by the Secretary of State."

I do not wish to commit myself by this Amendment. I only put it forward as a suggestion that there should be some responsible authority appointed to attend to this question of safety lamps. It is of the greatest importance that no particular class of lamp should be defined. The experience of the Belgian Government, which, 30 years ago, passed a decree authorizing the use of a particular form of safety lamp, has shown that that is a most mischievous course to adopt; it is entirely foreign to our principles of freedom to do so; but there can be no harm surely in giving a competent person like an Inspector of a district some such discretion as I venture to suggest.

Amendment proposed,

In page 29, line 5, after "inflammable," insert — Within one calendar month after the passing of this Act a sample of the safety lamps used in every mine shall be sent to the inspector for the district in which such mine is situated for his approval. He may require that any modification shall be made in it, or that another kind of lamp shall be adopted.

No safety lamps shall be introduced into a mine for the first time, after the passing of this Act, until a sample lamp has been submitted to and approved of by the inspector for the district in which such mine is situated.

Any colliery owner dissatisfied with anything done or required to be done by an inspector under this rule may appeal to the official assessors hereinafter mentioned, whose decision shall be final."—(*Mr. A. J. Williams.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. MATTHEWS: Although I do not dispute the soundness of the principles urged by the hon. Member (Mr. A. J. Williams), still I do dispute the wisdom of asking that the lamps shall be submitted to an Inspector for approval. This is a principle which I am not prepared to accept, as, in my opinion, it reverses the system on which the Bill is based. The system of the Bill is to let the owner select his own lamp at his own peril, and then to allow the Inspector to come in and say whether he objects to the lamp selected or not. Besides, the Inspector has no office at which he can receive lamps, neither has he appliances by which he can test them. Since the commencement of the discussion upon this Bill I have had shown to me two extremely good electric lamps. The owners of mines will, no doubt, watch the improvements made in lamps by the progress of science, and I think the period is not far distant when they will be able to get good electric safety lamps.

MR. A. J. WILLIAMS: Do I understand that it is competent for the Inspector to object to any lamp?

MR. MATTHEWS: Most certainly.

MR. A. J. WILLIAMS: On his own mere motion?

MR. MATTHEWS: Certainly.

MR. A. J. WILLIAMS: Then I ask, how it is that there are thousands of the safety lamps in use in England which are condemned by the Commission as absolutely unsafe? There must be something seriously wrong.

MR. MATTHEWS: Everything depends upon the velocity of the current. A Davy lamp is thoroughly safe in a mine where the velocity of the current is slow. Of course, a lamp can be totally unsafe in one colliery where there is a high speed of ventilation, while it would be perfectly safe in another mine where the circulation is slow; but, beyond doubt, the Inspector can, on his own motion, under Rule 43, object to any safety lamp. I think that this point can be properly dealt with in the special rules of collieries.

MR. A. J. WILLIAMS: I ask leave to withdraw my Amendment. The responsibility of refusing it, of course, rests with the Government.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. BURT: I beg to move the Amendment which stands in my name. My hon. Friend the Member for the Southern Division of Glamorgan (Mr. A. J. Williams) has pointed out that the Royal Commission on Accidents in Mines went into very elaborate and careful experiments in regard to safety lamps. It was proved by those experiments that certain classes of lamps were utterly unreliable, and that some of these were the Stephenson, the Clanny, and the Davy. I quite agree that it would be exceedingly difficult, indeed undesirable, for the Government through the Inspectors to say that certain lamps ought to be used; but, at the same time, those which are known to be dangerous should be entirely prohibited. The Home Secretary stated that Inspectors already have the power to object to certain lamps; and thereupon my hon. Friend (Mr. A. J. Williams) very pertinently asked how it was that there are a great number of lamps in use in the country which have been condemned by the Royal Commission? In page 75 of the Commissioners' Report reference is made to the Scotch lamp; and it is said that this lamp can scarcely be regarded as a safety lamp at all. This lamp, I understand, was in general use at the Udston Colliery, when that terrible explosion occurred some few months ago with such fearful consequences. The Commission have spoken very emphatically on this question; and on page 117 of their Report they say that it has been known that if an atmosphere becomes inflammable, the Stephenson, the Clanny, and the Davy lamps are quite unsafe. I move this Amendment with the utmost confidence that the Home Secretary will accept it, or that, if he refuses to accept it, the Committee will support me in carrying it. I fasten the responsibility upon the Government if they do not prohibit the use of these lamps, which have been proved by the Royal Commission to be utterly unsafe.

Amendment proposed,

In page 29, line 5, after "inflammable," to insert—"Provided that the words 'safety lamp' shall not be taken to include Stephenson, Clanny, or unprotected Davy lamps."—(*Mr. Burt.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. TOMLINSON: These words appear to me unnecessary, the lamps in question being excluded by the operation of Rule 9, already passed. That being the case, I do not see that the Amendment does any particular harm, and I am not disposed to object to it.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne) rose to speak.

THE CHAIRMAN: The words have been added to the Bill.

MR. CONYBEARE: I was on my feet, Sir, before the Question was put.

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; Committee counted, and 40 Members being found present,

Rule 10—Examination of safety lamps.

MR. CONYBEARE: On behalf of the hon. Member for East Donegal (Mr. Arthur O'Connor), I beg to move the Amendment which stands in his name—namely, in page 29, line 9, after "appointed," to insert "in writing."

THE CHAIRMAN: I must point out to the hon. Member that a similar Amendment has been twice rejected this evening.

MR. CONYBEARE: Then I will move the next Amendment, for there are two standing in the name of the hon. Member. I beg to move the Amendment in the same line, after "manager," to insert "and approved of by the Inspector."

Amendment proposed, in page 29, line 9, after "manager," to insert "and approved of by the Inspector."—(*Mr. Conybeare.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE CHAIRMAN rose to put the Question,

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether he will be kind enough to express his assent or dissent on this Amendment?

MR. MATTHEWS: I am quite unable at present to grasp what the Amendment is. I am trying to find out.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: The object of the Amendment is this—that the competent person appointed by the owner, agent, or manager for the purpose of examining the safety lamps immediately before they are taken into the workings for use shall be approved of by the Inspector. The Inspector shall see that he is properly qualified to discharge the duties with which he is intrusted.

MR. MATTHEWS: I have persistently objected to throwing responsibility of this kind upon Inspectors; and I, therefore, trust that the hon. Member will not insist upon this Amendment.

Question put, and *negatived.*

MR. A. J. WILLIAMS: I beg to move the Amendment standing on the Paper in my name, in page 29, line 13, after "order," and before "and," to insert "by placing it in an explosive mixture of air and inflammable gas." If my Amendment is adopted, the section will read—

"A competent person appointed by the owner, agent, or manager, for the purpose, shall, either at the surface or at the appointed lamp station, examine every safety lamp immediately before it is taken into the workings for use, and ascertain it to be in safe working order by placing it in an explosive mixture of air and inflammable gas and securely locked; and such lamps shall not be used until they have been so examined and found in safe working order and securely locked."

The result of all the experiments which have been made—the result of the 1,017 experiments made—went to show, as the Commissioners say, that the protection of safety lamps by simple inspection was impossible. They say that the only way to avoid the danger of the introduction of imperfect lamps into mines is to test every lamp with some inflammable gas before it is allowed to descend with the shift. It is quite obvious that the weakest link in the chain of safety, where safety lamps are used at all, is one single imperfect lamp. In the case of a sudden outburst of gas, or in the case of meeting with explosive gas in a mine, one single imperfection in a lamp which could not be discovered by ordinary observation, being so small that it is impossible to find it out by the naked eye, will be enough to bring about an explosion. The result was that the Commissioners took a good deal of pains to see whether it would not be possible to provide a thoroughly simple means of putting each lamp into good condition. They said it would be perfectly possible to do so, wherever there was gas in or near a colliery. Of course, it is said in a colliery where there is no external or artificial gas such a means of testing safety lamps cannot be adopted; but a case of that kind could be provided for by a slight alteration in my Amendment —for instance, by introducing the words "where practicable." I do think, however, that some means should be adopted for carrying out this suggestion. Where practicable, I think it is most desirable that this method of testing the efficiency of safety lamps should be adopted.

THE CHAIRMAN: In what form does the hon. Gentleman move the Amendment?

MR. A. J. WILLIAMS: After "order" to insert "by placing it where practicable in an explosive mixture of air and inflammable gas."

Amendment proposed,

In page 29, line 13, after "order" and before "end" insert "by placing it where practicable in an explosive mixture of air and inflammable gas."—(*Mr. A. J. Williams.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. P. STANHOPE (Wednesbury): There is a subsequent Amendment in my name as follows, to add at the end of Clause:—

> "That all safety lamps before going into the mine shall be examined and tested by gas, for the purpose of ascertaining their reliability or otherwise, by a competent person approved of by a Government Inspector. The names of the qualified person or persons to be placed on the pit heap."

That Amendment will, perhaps, be deemed by you, Sir, out of Order if this Amendment were accepted by the Committee; therefore I propose, at all events, to support my hon. Friend on the Amendment he desires to insert as a safeguard here. There can be no doubt whatever that safety lamps should be subjected to some test, as recommended by the Royal Commission, before being allowed to go down the pit. The difference between my hon. Friend's Amendment and my own would be that while under his Amendment the lamp would have to be approved of by a competent person appointed by the owner, agent, or manager, in my Amendment he would be a competent person approved of by the Government Inspector. But, at the same time, it is clear, from the Report of the Royal Commission who have examined carefully into the matter, that they have arrived at the conclusion that an ordinary examination of safety lamps, even where they are of simple construction, may easily fail to detect some flaws which may deprive them of the power of resisting gas. The Commissioners say that it is necessary to have some test in gas before the lamps are sent down the pit; they declare that it is absolutely necessary that lamps should be tested in explosive gas before being allowed to go down the shaft. They speak of several means of testing them, and refer particularly to a simple method which would meet every necessary purpose. There is one practical difficulty which will be suggested by hon. Gentlemen representing the owners of mines, and that is that mines are not always in juxtaposition to gas supplies. That is sometimes the case; but though gas may not be found in immediate proximity to a colliery, I think it is desirable that some simple practical test of this sort should be resorted to, and the words "when practicable" meet this objection. Inasmuch as the Bill itself says that it is not prepared to recommend any lamp, or even to exclude any lamp under its provisions, but only to require them to be subjected to a certain test, it is very necessary that that test should be complete. Well, the only complete test that is known to experts is that of subjecting the lamps to a mixture of air and gas. I hope the Committee will see that this is a desirable Amendment, and I trust that the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary will be able to accept it. I think it is absolutely necessary for the safety of a mine that some such proposal as this should be adopted.

MR. BARNES (Derbyshire, Chesterfield): I would point out that in many instances gasometers are miles away from the colliery; if there was gas in the neighbourhood it might be an easy matter.

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): How can you possibly produce the condition of things in your test which exists in the mine? You have in a mine not only an atmosphere which may be charged with gas, but an atmosphere in motion. Under the circumstances, I do not think it is possible to have a reliable test reproducing the conditions as they exist in the mine; and, therefore, I think that such a test as that proposed would be illusory and dangerous.

MR. A. J. WILLIAMS: The test I propose is one to show whether or not there is a hole or an imperfection in the lamp. The test is not as to whether the lamp will bear the velocity of 10 or 50 feet per second. The test is conducted in a specially constructed receptacle containing a small mixture of gas and air. The lamp is dipped into this receptacle, and if there is a hole in it the gas gets inside and it is found out. It is most important that this test should be applied. As to the objection of the hon. Member below me, I have met that by inserting the words "where practicable."

COLONEL BLUNDELL (Lancashire, S.W., Ince): I think that this rule should not be inserted in the Bill, as it would be impossible to test electric lamps in this way.

MR. BURT (Morpeth): No doubt, there are difficulties in this case; but I suppose we are here to try to get over difficulties. At any rate, the Royal Commission, after giving very great consideration to this subject, were unanimously of opinion that something should be done. There is nothing upon which they are more emphatic. In their Report they state that they consider it absolutely necessary that safety lamps should be regularly tested before they are allowed to descend the shaft. The hon. Member who has moved the Amendment has shown his reasonableness by modifying, and to some extent thereby weakening it, by inserting the words "where practicable." I really think that, with this modification, the Committee should have no difficulty in accepting the Amendment.

MR. DONALD CRAWFORD (Lanark, N.E.): I think it is to be regretted that mineowners on the opposite side of the House, and perhaps some on this side, do not show a little more desire to meet these Amendments, the object of which is to secure the safety of life. I am assured by practical men, who are not too familiar with the proceedings of the Commission, that the system proposed is the most necessary and most complete test. It is one which has been earnestly pressed, and I think it is hardly becoming that every improvement of this kind which is suggested should be met with opposition by hon. Gentlemen opposite.

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): I think the remark the hon. Member has just made is wholly unjustified. The mineowners in the House have shown over and over again that it is their earnest desire to do everything in their power to insure the safety of the miners. Moreover, as hon. Members should see, it is against the interest of mineowners that accidents should take place.

SIR JOSEPH PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): I hope we shall discuss this question without recrimination and without the throwing of motives across the floor of the House. The difficulties which some of these practical questions involve do not seem to be fully understood by hon. Gentlemen who represent mining constituencies, and who come down to the House having heard all the complaints of the miners, and not knowing what are the practical difficulties. With regard to these safety lamps, the hon. Member who has just addressed the Committee (Mr. Donald Crawford) speaks as if some of us mineowners had never paid any attention to safety lamps in our lives. Well, I may say that almost every day of my life—certainly that every month of my life—brings me a new safety lamp, and I am very much mistaken if other colliery owners are not in the same position. In the North of England we have a standing committee on safety lamps, and with every new lamp which is brought out, experiments are tried, and every endeavour is used by practical men to obtain the best light. When you put safety lamps into a mine you encounter difficulties. As I have said already, as soon as a safety lamp goes in a candle comes out, and the miner has to work in greater darkness, and is subject to other circumstances, and to accidents of a very serious character. Mineowners, therefore, do not adopt safety lamps until they are necessary. When, however, safety lamps are necessary let us have the best; but I submit that by trying experiments and putting clauses into this kind of Act of Parliament you will never get the best lamp. You get it by relying upon the simple process of supply and demand. You must depend, in some measure, upon the interest of the mineowner; he wants the best and the safest lamp that he can get; and you may depend upon it he will not fail to adopt the best means of keeping it in proper order, and of testing it when he has it. You had better leave this matter to practical people to whose interest it is to get a good—to get the best—lamp. You must bear in mind that in some districts you have some very little mines—well, who is to test the lamps there? The Amendment says "where practicable." Well, it is done where practicable now. In all the large collieries of the country that Amendment will have no effect, and the only result of adopting it would be to throw difficulties in the way of small owners who would find it very difficult to carry out the system proposed, and in respect of these people the hon. Member actually proposes to make an exception. I think we ought to get along in this Committee much more quickly than we are doing, and I think we should do so if we could only avoid getting into these scientific discussions which the hon. Member behind me has done so much to encourage. If the hon. Member will look at the Report of the Royal Commission, he will see that even they dared not recommend any particular safety lamp.

Mr. P. STANHOPE: I must protest against the assumption of the hon. Baronet that we are moving in this matter without a knowledge of the wants of the miners. We are moving in the matter in consequence of the Report of the Royal Commission, which was a very competent body to consider this question. They conducted their experiments and their inquiries over a long period. They had associated with them the cleverest experts and the most competent persons to give advice. The Commission itself was composed of persons thoroughly conversant with these subjects; they made certain recommendations, and those recommendations we are trying to introduce into this Bill. I do not think that this Committee will consider that the consideration of the recommendations of such a Commission is at all out of place in a discussion of this kind.

Sir CHARLES FORSTER (Walsall): I should like to point out that the whole of this Bill is confessedly based on the Report of the Royal Commission. Well, one of their most important recommendations was that safety lamps should be tested. We have just succeeded in getting an Amendment inserted which shall exclude defective lamps. Well, we want to make the Bill as effective as possible with reference to the lamps used, and we think that if a test like this could be used in a certain number of instances, so as to prove that the lamps used are free from holes through which the inflammable gas could not penetrate, we make safety lamps safer than they could otherwise be; and as this is the question of the life or otherwise death of a number of people, surely every possible precaution ought to be taken in the interest of these miners. I hope the Amendment will be accepted.

Mr. A. J. WILLIAMS: I can only speak of the Commission as one which had nothing in the world to do with it. I do not pin my faith at all to them; but I would point out that they are by no means drawn from the scientific circles—there are practical miners upon the Commission, such as Sir George Elliot and Mr. Lewis. That gives me confidence in the recommendations of the Commission such as we are now considering.

Mr. JOICEY (Durham, Chester-le-Street): I must confess that the recommendations of the Commission have been of considerable weight with me; and I think that, seeing that the hon. Member who moved the Amendment has consented to modify it, the Committee should be content to accept it.

Mr. YEO (Glamorgan, Gower): The question is this—is this a practicable, feasible test to apply? If so, I should hail it with satisfaction; I should welcome any test that would give additional safety to our colliers. At the same time, I must deprecate such remarks as those which have fallen from the hon. Gentleman who sits near me. For him to assume that colliery owners are so blind to their own interests—if they are so utterly indifferent to the interests of their *employés*—as to neglect the adoption of the necessary precautions against accidents, is a course of proceeding in which I do not think any other sane man would join him. So much hangs on the safety of the colliery and the prevention of explosions, that no colliery owner, in his senses, would decline to adopt any plan suggested which is practicable and easy of application. As one representing the colliery interest, I should be glad to accept the Amendment.

Mr. MATTHEWS: I do not know whether it would be of any use; but I would once more appeal to hon. Gentlemen to consider the words of the Bill they are amending. I submit that the words proposed to be inserted really weaken the Bill. The Bill requires that a competent person shall ascertain that the lamps are in safe working order. He has to do this by all the means which are open to him; and cannot hon. Members see that they weaken those words if they specify one mode, and one mode only, of ascertaining this? The competent person mentioned in the Bill, in order to satisfy this section, will have to adopt not one but all modes of ascertaining safety. The general words of the Bill require more than are in the words of the Amendment of the hon. Member. It does really seem to me that by too much minute specification you will cut down the effect of the Bill, in excluding all other, and perhaps better, modes of ascertaining the safety of lamps which may be discovered to-morrow. I have adopted a broad requirement. General words do more, and require more than the words of the hon. Member.

Question put.

The Committee *divided*;—Ayes 83; Noes 115: Majority 32.—(Div. List, No. 385.) [9.15 p.m.]

Sir JOHN SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield): I beg to move, in page 29, to leave out from line 23 to line 25. The effect of this Amendment will be to omit the following words:—

"A person shall not have in his possession any lucifer match or apparatus of any kind for striking a light except within a completely closed chamber attached to the fuse of the shot."

These words seem to me to be altogether unintelligible.

Amendment proposed, in page 29, to leave out from line 23 to line 25.—(*Sir John Swinburne.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

Mr. MATTHEWS: I cannot accept this Amendment. I fail to see that the words are unintelligible.

Sir JOHN SWINBURNE: You say that he is to have in his possession a lucifer match or apparatus within a completely closed chamber attached to the fuse of a shot. If a person has such in his possession he can fire it at any time.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Mr. TOMLINSON (Preston): I do not like to be the means of asking the Committee to accept proposals which would be drastic in their character, and which would impose upon the managers of mines a duty which would be objectionable both to them as having to carry it out, and to the men as having to be subjected to it, without serious necessity. It is, however, a matter of common knowledge that serious accidents occasionally arise through the rules as to not carrying lucifer matches or other means of striking a light being violated by the workmen; and I think it is desirable that we should insert in this clause some provision dealing with cases where men are suspected of violation of the rule. I think it only reasonable that where there is cause for suspicion, and where it is possible that the men who infringe the rules may be endangering the safety of themselves and their fellow-workmen, this precaution that I suggest should be taken. I do not wish to press the Amendment if the Committee is against it; but I certainly think it my duty to move it.

Amendment proposed,

In page 29, after line 25, to insert—"And the owner, agent, manager, or under manager shall be empowered to have any person searched whom he suspects to be in possession of lucifer matches, or other apparatus for striking a light."—(*Mr. Tomlinson.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. PICKARD (York, W.R., Normanton): We should have no objection whatever to an Amendment of this kind, if the hon. Member will amend it by inserting the words "and the person making such examination should before he makes it be himself examined by a third party." [*Laughter.*] Hon. Members laugh, but I will give a reason for this proposal. Our miners state that some of the colliery officials themselves carry lucifer matches into the mine and drop them into the pockets of the men. We have no objection to the rule proposed, but we want the man who makes the examination to be above suspicion; and we desire, therefore, that he should be examined himself before making the examination.

MR. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck): We are extremely anxious that every possible care should be taken to prevent workmen from taking into the mine anything which is likely to ignite gas or cause an explosion; and I may say that the great majority of the workmen are just as anxious as we are to prevent men taking matches or other inflammable substances into the mine. But we have an extreme contempt for such legislation as this, which will give an owner of a colliery or an official of a colliery power to go down into a mine and search the clothes of the workmen. This Amendment, if accepted by the Committee, would give the manager or person appointed by him power to go into the mine at any time, and subject the men to the indignity of being searched. I think it is certainly to be hoped that the Committee will reject the Amendment, if the hon. Member presses it to a Division. I hope, however, he will see his way to withdraw his Amendment.

MR. TOMLINSON: As I said before, the last thing I wish to do is to press this Amendment upon an unwilling Committee; but it has been suggested to me, and I thought it my duty to bring it forward. The hon. Member opposite objects to the workman being subjected to the indignity of having his clothes searched. This matter was brought forward at one of our meetings, and discussed as a means of preventing accidents; and I indignantly repudiate the suggestion that its object is to enable anyone to go down into the pit in an informal manner and search the clothes of the colliers. What the Amendment means is that a formal search should take place.

Question put, and *negatived.*

Rule *agreed to.*

Rule 11—Lamp stations.

MR. W. ABRAHAM (Glamorgan, Rhondda): I beg to move, in page 29, line 28, the insertion of the following words:—"And that such lamp station be so constructed as to form a harbour of refuge." The object of the Amendment is to bring about the establishment of lamp stations at places in the collieries where lamps can be relighted in the interior of the workings, so as to prevent the possibility of danger from the exposure of naked lights, and also to avoid the present dangerous practice of having to travel great distances to a lamp station in order to obtain light when the lamps have been extinguished. Every practical man in this House, whether he be owner, agent, or workman, will know how exceedingly dangerous this practice of going long distances to have the lamps relighted is. Even for this purpose alone these lamp stations would be a great boon and a great preventative of accidents. I may also point out that these places, being established and known to the colliers, would, at the time of an explosion, be of special value as harbours of refuge towards which the men might make in case of emergency, instead of, as at present, being obliged to rush towards the bottom of the shaft to the one outlet—an outlet which, under such circumstances, the men are often unable to reach. Such a station as I propose should consist of a compartment of steel, iron, or other material that could be made air-tight, and strong enough to resist high pressure, internal and external. Where possible, they might be cut out of the rock. Each station should be supplied with separate intake and outlet pipes in communication with the surface. The openings or ways into the compartments should be through a series of doors or manholes, so that, by closing the same, the compartments could be cut off from the mine. It would be illusory to say that even if these lamp stations or refuges were constructed, we should succeed in preventing the possibility of colliery explosions; but still it cannot be denied that a system such as this, or places such as these, would tend to materially reduce the chances of catastrophes, inasmuch as they would provide facilities for obtaining light, and diminish the use of naked lights in places where they are now used. The hon. Gentleman may think that this is all purely imaginary on my part, and that the construction of such lamp stations would be impracticable; but I beg to assure him that it is not imaginary. I beg to inform him that in one of the largest collieries in the Rhondda one of these stations has been constructed, and has been inspected by employers and workmen together, and that all who have seen it regard it as very excellent and simple. It is in Taylor Down Colliery, and I think it has been patented by the inventor. It consists of a place of refuge to which instant retreat can be made; it is supplied with fresh air from the surface, and, the doors being-air tight, the lamps can be opened inside with perfect safety. Even in the case of an explosion—though it has not yet had the chance of standing that test—it is believed that it would answer admirably. For ordinary working purposes, however, it is doing its work in a very successful manner. I know that colliery owners will say that this question of a lamp refuge in the workings is at present in too experimental a stage to have great attention paid to it; still, as a matter of humanity, I think it should command the serious consideration of the House.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think the Amendment must be put in a slightly different form, thus—"and such lamp station shall be so constructed as to form a harbour of refuge."

Amendment proposed, in page 29, line 28, after "air," insert "and such lamp station shall be so constructed as to form a harbour of refuge."—(*Mr. W. Abraham.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. YEO (Glamorgan, Gower): I think the suggestion made in this Amendment is one well worthy of consideration. The idea of having an advance station in towards the main workings is very good; but I think that the hon. Member who proposed the Amendment made a very true remark when he said that it must be regarded as in a very experimental stage at the present time. At present our lamp stations are placed at the bottom of the shaft, and I think it would be a very good thing that the workmen should not be compelled, in order to have their lamps relighted, to make a long circuit of the mines in order to reach the station at the bottom of the shaft. I think that the necessity for making that long circuit frequently tends at the present time to very unwise things being done. At the same time, the plan suggested by the hon. Member seems to be only applicable to such collieries as possess the advantage of air under compression. Where collieries have compressed air and pipes circulating through the mine, there should be no difficulty in having a jet of air poured into a lamp station of this kind from the main—giving a supply of pure air, independent of the ventilation of the colliery. Supposing that such a chamber could be ventilated by some ingenious method—as it may be in the case referred to by the hon. Member—it would be a desirable thing to have one of these stations in every colliery. I do not think, however, that we are not yet in a position to legislate upon the matter. I think the hon. Gentleman has done well to call attention to an invention of so important a character; but I would urge him to be satisfied with having made his statement. Having endeavoured to fix the attention of the House on an invention that promises well for the future, I trust he will not seek to embody this Amendment in the Bill at the present moment.

MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.W.): I fail to appreciate the spirit of the remarks of the hon. Gentleman who has just spoken. He tells us that this matter is only in an experimental stage at present; but we have been told distinctly by the hon. Member who has brought forward the Amendment that in his constituency of the Rhondda Valley there is already a harbour of refuge constructed in a colliery on the very plan the hon. Member has mentioned. I want to know when we are going to get beyond the experimental stage? We shall certainly not do it by debating in an academical sense and doing nothing. I have risen merely to say a word in support of the principle of this Amendment, and to express a hope that the hon. Member who has brought it forward will press it to a Division.

Question, "That those words be there inserted," put, and *negatived.*

Rule *agreed to.*

Rule 12—Use of explosives below ground.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal E.): Rule 12 says that "any explosive substance shall only be used in the mine below ground as follows." Then it goes on to specify conditions. I would much prefer to see the Rule made more stringent. I would like to see the initial words altered so as to be prohibitive of the use of explosives except in certain well-defined and limited cases. In discussing the subject-matter of the clause, I am met with the difficulty that the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department has given Notice of an Amendment of his own clause, consisting of the paragraphs from (f) to (m), which he wishes to insert in place of the existing paragraphs from (f) to (l). I presume, if this Amendment is put from the Chair in the same way in which Amendments have been put in respect to other clauses, we shall find it difficult to move Amendments, because the Motion will have to be to omit all the paragraphs from (f) to (l).

Mr. TOMLINSON (Preston): I rise to Order.

The CHAIRMAN: What Amendment does the hon. Member for East Donegal (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) propose?

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I wish to ask your ruling, Sir, before I proceed with an Amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: Perhaps the hon. Member will state at once what he wishes to do.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: If I had not been interrupted by the hon. Member opposite, by this time I should have finished my statement. There is a notice of an Amendment standing on the Paper in the name of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department.

Mr. Tomlinson again rose.

The CHAIRMAN: Order, order!

Mr. TOMLINSON: My Amendment comes before the right hon. Gentleman's. [*Cries of* "Order!" and "Name!"]

Mr. Cunninghame Graham

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I wish to ask, Sir, whether you would put from the Chair the separate paragraphs of this clause, because I presume, if you put them in a body, much confusion would be caused? The discussion which will take place upon the hon. Gentleman's proposal will be at sixes and sevens—we shall all be at cross purposes, and at the end of our discussion we shall find ourselves no further advanced than we were at the beginning. If the separate paragraphs of this clause are put separately from the Chair we shall avoid that difficulty, and probably economize a considerable amount of time.

The CHAIRMAN: I may inform the hon. Member that the paragraphs will be proceeded with in the ordinary way —I shall put them as they arise in the ordinary manner, beginning with the first paragraph. When we get to (f), the Question will be that the first words of the paragraph be omitted.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: Will the Motion be for the omission of all the paragraphs from (f) to (l)?

The CHAIRMAN: No; only a certain number of words in the first paragraph will be put, so as to save subsequent Amendments if the Amendment is carried.

Mr. TOMLINSON: I have an Amendment on the Paper which I desire to move here. Rule 12 says—

> "A workman shall not have in use at one time in any one place more than one of such cases or canisters."

I wish to insert, after the word "workman," the words "not being a competent person appointed to fire shots." I move this Amendment for the reason that in the case of a competent person who may have very extensive duties to discharge it may be necessary for him to have a larger quantity of an explosive in use than one case or canister.

Amendment proposed, in page 29, line 39, after "workmen," to insert "not being a competent person appointed to fire shots."—(*Mr. Tomlinson.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I shall oppose the insertion of these words for the reason that I am altogether opposed to the use of gunpowder for blasting purposes in mines——

Mr. MATTHEWS rose and made an observation which was inaudible.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I really must protest against these interruptions. I refer to the Amendment of the Home Secretary (Mr. Matthews), and the hon. Member for Preston (Mr. Tomlinson) interrupts me; I refer to an Amendment of the hon. Member for Preston, and the Home Secretary interrupts me. I object altogether to the use of gunpowder in mines, and I appeal from the Home Secretary and from the hon. Member for Preston to one of the Government Inspectors—namely, to the opinion of Mr. Hall, who declares that 20 years' experience has satisfied him that more danger of an explosion is incurred in the operation of blasting than from any other cause, and also that it is largely resorted to where it would pay persons very much better to dispense with it. The Legislature ought long ago to have forbidden blasting in coal pits full of men. It has been strongly urged by Mr. Hall and other Inspectors that in a new Coal Mines Bill the law should prohibit blasting, and should require, where it does take place, that everyone should be out of the way while the blasting is being done except the shot firer. What I have to say upon that is this—that I cannot understand how anyone can consent to allow blasting to take place who admits that in such operations there is such serious danger to life and limb that it is absolutely necessary to clear the scene, as far as possible, of human beings while it is taking place. It makes an exception, of course, in the case of a shot-lighter. Why is such an exception made? It is a question of minimizing the risk. I think civilization does not require that a forlorn hope should be constituted in the shape of these blastings.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. Gentleman is not speaking at all to the Amendment. The sub-section is that—

"A workman shall not have in use at any one time in any one place more than one of such cases or canisters;"

and the Amendment is to insert after the word "workman," "not being the competent person appointed to fire the shots."

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: The Amendment goes to a relaxation of the stringency of the rule. I am in favour of making the rule more stringent than it is, and limiting, not only the amount of explosive substances allowed in the field of operation, but also limiting the number of such operations. I object to any relaxation of the proposed rule. I say that if there is danger at all from one man, or 20 men, being allowed to bring these explosive substances into a mine, the thing ought not to be allowed. The hon. Member for Preston (Mr. Tomlinson) has himself mentioned gunpowder, and that is why I thought this was a proper occasion to enter a protest against the use of that explosive. Gunpowder is not necessary. You may have dynamite-soldered cartridges, which are much safer. You may effect your explosion by other means; therefore, it is reasonable to object to the use of gunpowder, especially in the face of the testimony of one of Her Majesty's Inspectors with regard to the danger attending the use of gunpowder. I think this is a point of the Bill with regard to which the Committee ought to proceed with the greatest possible care.

Mr. ATHERLEY-JONES (Durham, N.W.): I do hope the hon. Member for Preston, for the purpose of saving the time of the Committee, and enabling us to proceed with this Bill and getting it finished, if possible, this Session, will withdraw his Amendment. The clause to which reference has been made by the hon. Member is taken from the Act of 1872, which provides that an explosive substance shall not be taken into the mine, except in cartridges in a case or canister containing not more than four pounds. The object of this particular clause is to prevent a number of canisters knocking about the mine without rhyme or reason. I trust the hon. Gentleman will withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Sir JOSEPH PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): On behalf of my hon. Relative (Mr. H. F. Pease), I beg to move the Amendment which stands in his name, and that is to leave out the words "or have in his possession," in line 41. The hon. Gentleman who has placed this Amendment on the Paper represents the Cleveland iron and stone district in the North Riding of Yorkshire, and he proposes this Amendment at the request of miners and men. In that district there is no gas generated whatever, and the men feel that if they are not to have in their possession during the process of blasting "any iron or steel pricker, scraper, charger, tamping rod, or stemmer," they will be unable to carry on their occupation. These tools are used in the process of mining, in drilling holes for the shot; and my hon. Relative desires these words should be omitted from the Bill, because the tools remain actually in the possession of the men, although they are not used during the actual process of blasting.

Amendment proposed, in page 29, line 41, leave out "or have in his possession."—(*Sir Joseph Pease.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

MR. MATTHEWS: The hon. Baronet has not explained to us whether a man should be allowed to have in his possession tools he is prohibited from using. He is not to use any iron or steel pricker, scraper, charger, tamping rod, or stemmer; but he may have them in his possession. He is to be in the position of Tantalus—he is to have a tool constantly dangling before him, but he is not to use it.

SIR JOSEPH PEASE: The clause, amended as proposed, would read—

> "In the process of blasting, a person shall not use any iron or steel pricker, scraper, charger, tamping rod, or stemmer."

A man does not want to use any of these things in the process of blasting; but he has to have them in his possession during the time he is at work.

MR. MATTHEWS: What is an iron or steel pricker, scraper, charger, tamping rod, or stemmer used for, except for the process of blasting? They are not used for the eating of a dinner.

SIR JOSEPH PEASE: I am sorry to have to explain. These tools are used for the purpose of making an incision for the powder. A man does not use them in the process of blasting; but he has them in his possession while the blasting is taking place; he cannot make a hole without having these tools in his possession.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

MR. TOMLINSON: I beg to move the omission of the word "scraper" in line 42. The scraper is only used for scraping the inside of a hole. It is not capable of being used for any dangerous purpose.

Amendment proposed, in line 42, to leave out "scraper."—(*Mr. Tomlinson.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'scraper' stand part of the Clause."

SIR JOSEPH PEASE: I have letters in my hand relating to this very word, and forwarded to me by the representatives of the Cleveland mineowners, and by the secretary to the Cleveland miners. The scraper used in the Cleveland district is an iron or steel one, and there is no danger in using such a tool, because it does not strike a light. My informants are of opinion, however, that if a copper tool is to be used instead of an iron one they will be put to considerable unnecessary expense. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will look into this matter, and see by Report whether it is not possible for him to meet the wishes of the miners in this respect.

MR. MATTHEWS: I will inquire and see if I can satisfy the hon. Baronet.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. COGHILL (Newcastle-under-Lyme): I beg to propose to insert after the words "where the charge has missed fire" in line 2, page 30—

> "Provided that where an electrical apparatus has been employed to ignite a shot or shots, the workman in case of a miss-fire (if the wires used to ignite such shot or shots have been previously disconnected from the electrical apparatus) may resume work immediately after such miss-fire."

The advantages of this Amendment are two-fold, and I will mention them very briefly. In the first place, the Amendment encourages the use of electrical apparatus in mines, which is a very desirable thing, as it does away with the use of the fuse; and, secondly, it prevents a great waste of time which now elapses after a shot is fired, before the workmen may resume work in the mine. Under the present system, as often as four hours or even more have to transpire after a shot is fired before workmen can resume work in the part of the mine where the blasting has taken place. I hope the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department will see his way to accept this Amendment.

Amendment proposed,

In page 30, line 2, after "where the charge has missed fire"—insert "Provided that where an electrical apparatus has been employed to ignite a shot or shots, the workmen, in case of a miss-fire (if the wires used to ignite such shot or shots have been previously disconnected from the electrical apparatus) may resume work immediately after such miss fire." — (*Mr. Coghill.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. MATTHEWS: I quite agree that the words of the hon. Gentleman embody a perfectly legitimate and proper arrangement; but will he do me the favour of observing that there is no prohibition against the resumption of work after a shot has missed fire? The words are totally unnecessary. Why should we put in words to secure liberty to do that which is not prohibited? I appeal to hon. Members not to propose such Amendments as this, especially in view of the amount of work we have yet to do.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. MATTHEWS: I will not detain the Committee long in moving the Amendment which stands in my name. Hon. Gentlemen will observe that I have framed a new set of rules with regard to shot firing. It is with great reluctance I have approached the question, because of the difficulty experienced in respect of it. Since the Bill has been drafted, however, I have received representations from various persons interested in mining in different parts of the country, relating to the manner in which the rules were drawn in the original Bill, especially Rule G and Rule H. It was represented to me that I was offering a serious impediment to the mining industry in various parts of the country. The difficulty I have felt all along in framing the shot-firing clause is to define in any language that will fit all cases the condition of safety, or the condition of danger respectively. As the Committee know perfectly well, in the present law the condition of safety is described by two features; first, that there shall be no blue flame upon the cap of a safety lamp; and secondly, that blue flame has been absent for three months. The time test, so far as I can ascertain from practical men, has given universal dissatisfaction. To talk about what the condition of the mine was three months ago is perfectly idle, and the Committee will see I felt this very strongly when I drew these clauses originally. Upon further reflection, and consideration and consultation with practical men, it was pointed out that the time test was altogether a bad one and an unsatisfactory one, and that the only value of the time test or of looking back was simply to give you an additional chance of checking any error in your inspection. Of course, the important thing is to ascertain the condition of the mine at the moment you are firing the shot. There may be error and negligence, of course, and the only value of the time test—that is, of looking back—is to get a correction by several observations. The question is, how far is it reasonably practicable or reasonably wise to carry that repetition of the observation? To go back three months, practical men say, really does no good. A colliery might be perfectly free from gas three months ago and dangerous now, or *vice versâ*—it may be free from gas now while it was dangerous three months ago. The only use of going back is, I say, to afford some correction of your observations at the time. The important thing is to know the condition of things at the moment you are going to fire the shot. If you look back, it is only as a means of verifying or making yourselves sure of your observations. I hope that in what I have done I have not done wrong. The Committee will see that in these new clauses I have practically abandoned the time test, except to this extent—that I have provided that you should look back for the last four inspections under Rule 4, and the Committee will remember what those inspections are. If your ventilating district has not got a clean bill of health; if you have got gas anywhere recorded in one of the four inspections, I now require that a competent person shall go to the place where gas is reported to be, and shall ascertain, by inspection, that the gas has been cleared away. Is it to be cleared away absolutely? Is it to be cleared away so that there shall not be a scintilla of gas to be found? I am told that is too much to demand for the practical working of collieries. It is enough that the gas shall be so far cleared away that the place where gas was reported is in a safe condition—that is, that it is safe to fire a shot in the ventilating district, notwithstanding that there was gas. So far for the ventilating district. Then, I have made a provision which I think is a fair and essential one—namely, that the place where the shot is going to be fired, and a radius of 20 yards of it, shall be examined by a competent person to see if it is safe to fire a shot. Furthermore, I have provided that if the place is dusty you must water it for 20 yards round the spot where you fire the shot. I am sorry that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Leeds (Sir Lyon Playfair) is not present because he has suggested that deliquiscent salts should be sprinkled about the place instead of water. If you apply these salts long enough before the shot is fired, so as to make the roof, sides, and floor, in a wet condition at the time you fire the shot, this process will be found to be quite as good as watering. In some cases, where the sides and roof are of clay, watering would ruin the mine, and the alternative of using a water cartridge is permitted. Finally, as before, I have framed a special rule relating to the haulage road. There have been, of late, serious and terrible explosions in haulage roads, in mines, which seem to show that light dust not only aggravates explosions, but is itself capable of producing an extensive explosion. That was the case at Elmore, and at Alltofts the explosion was apparently due to dust alone. It is provided, therefore, that in haulage roads, not only shall the conditions as to watering be observed, but that workmen shall be removed from the seam in which the shot is to be fired, and from all seams communicating with the same shafts in the same level. I submit these rules with diffidence and deference to the Committee. All I can say is, I have done my best, on the one hand to insure the safety of the miners, and on the other not to injure the mining industry. I shall be quite ready to accept any Amendment to my Amendment which the Committee may think reasonable.

Amendment proposed,

In pages 30 and 31, leave out from (f) to (l) both inclusive, and insert—

"(f.) In any place in which the use of a locked safety lamp is for the time being required by or in pursuance of this Act, or which is dry and dusty, no shot shall be fired except by or under the direction of a competent person appointed by the owner, agent, or manager of the mine, and such person shall not fire the shot, or allow it to be fired, until he has examined both the place itself where the shot is to be fired and all contiguous accessible places of the same seam within a radius of twenty yards, and has found such place safe for firing;

"(g.) If in any mine, at either of the four inspections under rule 4 recorded last before a shot is to be fired, inflammable gas has been reported to be present in the ventilating district in which the shot is to be fired, the shot shall not be fired unless a competent person, appointed as aforesaid, has examined the place where gas has been so reported to be present, and has found that such gas has been cleared away, and that there is not at or near such place sufficient gas issuing or accumulated to render it unsafe to fire the shot, or unless the explosive employed in firing the shot is used with water or other contrivance, so as to prevent it from inflaming gas, or is of such a nature that it cannot inflame gas;

"(h.) If the place where a shot is to be fired is dry and dusty, then the shot shall not be fired unless one of the following conditions is observed—that is to say, (1) unless the place of firing and all contiguous accessible places within a radius of twenty yards therefrom are at the time of firing in a wet state from thorough watering, or other treatment equivalent to watering, in all parts where dust is lodged, whether roof, floor, or sides; or (2) in the case of places in which watering would injure the roof or floor, unless the explosive is used with water, or other contrivance, so as to prevent it from inflaming gas or dust, or is of such a nature that it cannot inflame gas or dust;

"(i.) If such dry and dusty place is part of a main haulage road, or is a place contiguous thereto, and showing dust adhering to the roof and sides, no shot shall be fired there unless both the conditions mentioned in sub-head (h) have been observed, or unless such one of the conditions mentioned in sub-head (h) as may be applicable to the particular place has been observed, and moreover all workmen have been removed from the seam in which the shot is to be fired, and from all seams communicating with the shaft on the same level, except the men engaged in firing the shot, and such other persons not exceeding ten as are necessarily employed in attending to the ventilating furnaces, steam boilers, engines, machinery, winding apparatus, signals, or horses, or in inspecting the mine;

"(k.) In this rule 'ventilating district' means such part of a seam as has an independent intake commencing from a main intake air course, and an independent return air way terminating at a main return air course; and 'main haulage roads' means a road which has been, or for the time being is, in use for moving trams by steam or other mechanical power;

"(l.) Where a seam of a mine is not divided into separate ventilating districts, the provisions of sub-head (g.) shall be read as though the word 'seam' were substituted for the words 'ventilating district;'

"(m.) So much of this rule as requires the explosive substance taken into the mine to be in cartridges, and the provisions (g.), (h.), (i.), (k.), and (l.) shall not apply to mines of clay or stratified ironstone in the lias formation, which do not give off or contain inflammable gas."—(*Mr. Secretary Matthews.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'In any place in a mine' stand part of the Clause."

Mr. BURT (Morpeth): We have now reached the most important and probably the most difficult part of the Bill. It is but justice to the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary (Mr. Matthews) to admit, as I frankly do, that he has given the utmost consideration to this very complicated and difficult question. I consider the Amendment now before the Committee is a great improvement on the clause as it was originally drawn. The substitution of "place" for "district" or "mine" is a very considerable improvement, but there is not yet a definition of the phrase "dry and dusty," and probably it will be very difficult to find one. It will be seen that the manager of a mine is to decide what is a "dry and dusty" place. Now, if this decision is left entirely with the manager I submit that, considering that he will be placing his mine under much severer restrictions than would otherwise be the case, he will be under a great temptation to run extra risk rather than submit to such restrictions. Where there is individual ownership and responsibility coming directly home to a particular man, that man will naturally take special pains to run as little risk as possible; but in the case of Limited Liability Companies, though the directions may not be very plainly given to that effect, it is implied that the managers should work the mine with as little cost as possible. I think it is very desirable that we should have some more strict definition than we have in the clause as it stands. I think it would have been much better if the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department could have seen his way to laying down a general principle in regard to shot firing. He might have laid down general principles which would have been much more effective in the direction of safety than the complicated provisions which we have now before us. However, I do not at all complain; but in view of the difficulties of the question, I recognize, as I think I have done already, very thankfully that the Home Secretary has shown every disposition to deal with the question as effectively and broadly as possible in the direction of safety, and in the direction of making a practicable Bill. I have an Amendment to submit, and it is one which may appeal to the Home Secretary's mind. It is to the effect that no shot shall be fired until the agent or manager has examined both the place itself where the shot is to be fired and all the contiguous accessible places of the same seam within a radius of 20 yards into which a safety lamp or indicator capable of detecting 1 per cent of gas is inserted. It is exactly in inaccessible places that the danger lies; and the right hon. Gentleman has already pointed out, in the statement he has made to the Committee, that in some places explosions have occurred where there was no evidence at all of the presence of gas, and where there was reason to believe that the explosion was due almost entirely to the presence of a large quantity of coal dust. As the right hon. Gentleman is aware, the ordinary method of examination with a safety lamp will only show 2 per cent of gas—it will not show less than 2 per cent of gas; and it has been already demonstrated by experiments that 2 per cent of gas mixed with coal dust may afford conditions sufficient to bring about a very serious explosion indeed. Now, there are indicators which are capable of detecting a much smaller amount than 2 per cent—even less than 1 per cent, I believe, can be shown—and I think it exceedingly desirable that it should be detected in as small quantities as possible. Perhaps this might be made prospective. I do not know that things are quite ripe for its application at once; but I do think that, as soon as possible, we ought to have the best scientific instruments which it is possible to secure in order to detect the smallest amount possible of gas.

The CHAIRMAN: The Amendment the hon. Member proposes cannot be moved at present until the first Amendment is carried to leave out certain words. The Question I have to put now is that the words "in any place in a mine," stand part of the clause.

Question, "That the words 'in any place in a mine,' stand part of the Clause," put, and *negatived.*

Words *omitted.*

Question proposed, "That the proposed words be there inserted."

Amendment proposed,

In line 8 of the proposed Amendment, after the words "twenty yards," insert the words "into which a safety lamp or indicator capable of detecting so small a portion as one per cent of gas can be there inserted."—(*Mr. Burt.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. A. J. WILLIAMS (Glamorgan, S.): I cannot refrain from expressing satisfaction at the original clause having been replaced by this clause on the Paper. Feeling strongly, as I do, the importance of providing for the safety of miners, it did seem to me that the sub-section of the original clause would have worked the greatest inconvenience and hardship throughout the whole of the country. But, whilst fully admitting that I am at a loss to understand—I do not know whether it is competent for me, in discussing this particular Amendment, to deal with the whole clause, or whether I am bound to confine myself to the particular Amendment before the Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member must confine himself to the particular Amendment.

Mr. A. J. WILLIAMS: Then, in confining myself to that, I venture to think that the right hon. Gentleman is, perhaps, re-introducing a very grave element into the clause. I have already ventured to bring before the Committee the subject of a scientific instrument that detects a very small quantity of gas in a mine, and I believe that in process of a very short time those instruments will be found to be very much more simple and very much more readily available for purposes of detecting gas than they are at the present time, and that they will be brought into common use. But at the present time it would be undesirable to make it compulsory to adopt it. We are endeavouring, so far as I can understand the position of affairs—and I hope it will be made known as publicly as possible—to bring about a compromise. This clause is in the nature of a temporary compromise. It is quite clear, from what the Commissioners have told us, that it is possible before long that we may be able to adopt an explosive which will be absolutely safe; but at this stage, very naturally, a great industry cannot accept a revolution by a stroke of the pen, or by a clause in an Act of Parliament; and I cannot help thinking that it would be desirable that two or three years should be allowed to elapse until this new explosive, which we are told is absolutely safe, can be made applicable. Do not let us spoil this compromise by inserting a clause which would make it almost impracticable. If the Amendment of the hon. Member for Morpeth (Mr. Burt) is adopted, it is clear that before any shot can be fired some instrument must be used which will detect 1 per cent of gas. It is equally clear that no safety lamp detects anything under 2½ per cent of gas; therefore, we make it obligatory on the master of any colliery in the Kingdom before a shot is fired to use an instrument. I think that, for the time being, we must be content with the cap of the safety lamp. To that extent the Government will adopt the Amendment of my hon. Friend. I think it necessary, before a shot is fired anywhere in a mine where safety lamps are used, that the place should not only be generally examined, but that some means should be adopted to ascertain whether there is anything approaching an explosive mixture of air and gas and coal dust within the 20 yards. I hope that in this particular clause the Government will accept, with some modifications, the Amendment of my hon. Friend.

Mr. YEO (Glamorgan, Gower): It seems to me a mistake to assert that 1 per cent of gas in a mine could be detected by an indicator. We have no reliable indicator at our disposal other than the safety lamp. Some reference has been made to the Liveling indicator; well, we have tried that at some of our collieries, but have received very bad reports of it from our general manager. It is a mistake to place upon a colliery manager a duty which he is unable to discharge—that is to say, the duty of employing an indicator which shall show 1 per cent of gas. I would defy the hon. Member who makes the proposal to do it himself.

Sir HUSSEY VIVIAN (Swansea, District): I think that, for all practical purposes, the safety of a mine would be secured by the words which are proposed by the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department. It will provide that the place where the shot is fired is rendered perfectly secure before the firing. I think the words proposed by the right hon. Gentleman will be found in practice to be completely sufficient, because they provide that the place shall be safe for firing. Without going into niceties as to how much per cent of gas is present, the clause provides that the place shall be safe for firing. If those words are accepted, I think they will be sufficient to assure the safety of the mine under all circumstances. I must say I think it will be a very onerous position to place the owner or manager of a mine in, to require that the particular test of 1 per cent shall be imposed on him by a statutory enactment. To place him under such a condition will be a very serious matter indeed. I think it is quite right to place him under a statutory obligation to see that every place shall be safe for firing; but to say that the place shall not contain more than 1 per cent of gas, when it is evident that the test by which you would determine whether 1 per cent of gas was present is still a most difficult and most uncertain test, would be to place the manager or owner in a very onerous position. And I do hope that my hon. Friend, who is so very reasonable in all that he says, and in all that he does, in regard to this Bill, will not press this Amendment. It appears to me, and I have very great pleasure in saying it, that the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department has met the requirements of the various interests—those of owners of mines, and also of those who work in the mines—in a very admirable spirit. I took an active part in the discussion on the first Coal Mines Regulation Bill which was ever introduced into this House in 1861; I took an interest in the subject subsequently in 1862; and I am bound to say that I have never known any Home Secretary—even carrying my mind back to Sir George Cornewall Lewis—who has endeavoured more earnestly to fulfil his very onerous duties of providing for the safety of the men in the mines of the country than the right hon. Gentleman the present Home Secretary. I cannot but tender to him my grateful thanks for the earnest manner in which he has devoted his attention to this most difficult clause. I am bound to say I entirely approve of the mode in which he has met the other difficulties which he has had to encounter, and I think it must be a very great satisfaction to him to know that he has met both the requirements of the master and the man. I have received testimony from both men and masters in the great district of Glamorgan to the effect that they are perfectly satisfied with the Amendments proposed by the right hon. Gentleman. Not very long ago a large number of working miners came up here; and it happened accidentally that I went into the room where a large number of them were present without any of them being aware that I was going. One and all of them said to me, on referring to this clause as it then stood—"It will be a very dark day for South Wales when that clause is carried." They feared, and I believe rightly, that it would have exercised a very serious influence on our mining industry in South Wales. But they are now absolutely and entirely satisfied with the clause as it stands, and I do trust that it will be carried.

SIR JOSEPH PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): I have listened with great satisfaction to the remarks of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Swansea District (Sir Hussey Vivian), and I wish to re-echo his words, and the remarks of the hon. Member for Morpeth (Mr. Burt), as to the great pains the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary has taken with regard to this clause. A more difficult and complicated subject a man could hardly turn his attention to, because these clauses are not clauses to fit a particular mine, but to affect the whole mining interest generally in the Kingdom. I believe that if we begin to deal with these clauses in the way of minute criticism, and if we begin to advocate the views which different districts take upon the matter, we shall never get through this Bill during the present Session. I do not know if hon. Gentlemen who sit behind me will agree; but I would beg them not to move their Amendments on the Paper with regard to these clauses. Let us take them *en bloc*, and if we find in the course of the working of them that they require amendment, when we come together again there will be no difficulty in bringing in a Supplementary Bill for the purpose of amendment. But if we start criticizing line by line these difficult questions, I am sure we shall not only consume the whole night in the work, but we shall consume more time than Her Majesty's Government can possibly afford during the present Session. As to the Amendment now moved, I believe I am right in saying that no safety lamp could indicate the presence of so small a quantity as 1 per cent of gas, and therefore the hon. Member drives us back to the indicator. With regard to the indicator, the Royal Commission has told us that there is not one you can rely upon without running extra risk of danger. An indicator is a thing which may indicate very accurately in the right hands, but which may indicate very wrongly if put in other hands.

MR. W. ABRAHAM (Glamorgan, Rhondda): I am sure no words from me are needed in confirmation of the statement of other hon. Members as to the efficient and practical manner in which the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary has discharged the difficult task he has had to perform. I should like to know exactly what is meant by the Amendment of my hon. Friend the Member for Morpeth (Mr. Burt), because it would give me very great pain indeed to have to go into a different Lobby to him upon this question. I should be sorry to differ from him on such a matter of importance. Sub-section 4 of Rule 4 says that the inspection shall be made with a locked safety lamp. The first part of the Amendment of my hon. Friend is met in that Rule; but what is the point? We want to know whether, by an indicator, you would be able to find 1 per cent, or any per cent, less than that which you would discover by a safety lamp? If you could find even a less percentage than that, you would then prevent a shot being fired—is it that you want to do that, or that you simply want to have a knowledge of the amount of gas in the mine when the shot was fired? Perhaps the hon. Gentleman would explain what he means by the Amendment, and then probably it will not be necessary that we should divide. I fully explained the matter as to the specification question put to me by my hon. Friend as to whether this would prevent a shot being fired. I say "No;" but it is as well that you should be aware that you have gas in a mine if there is gas in it. You cannot indicate less than 2 per cent with a safety lamp, scarcely less than $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent; but if there is 1 per cent of gas in a mine, it is as well that you should know that it is there. If the colliery managers are quite prepared to accept the risk of firing shots with 1 per cent of gas in a mine, let them do it. I should not alter the clause, but should leave it to their discretion.

Question put.

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 91; Noes 142: Majority 51.—(Div. List, No. 386.) [11.25 P.M.]

Amendment amended, and *agreed to.*

MR. TOMLINSON: I feel bound to call the attention of the Committee to the Amendment standing in my name—namely, to leave out the words "in the case of places in which watering would injure the roof or floor." I think it is only fair to those who desire to use the high explosives in preference to the use of gunpowder with watering. As I understand, if these explosives are used carefully they are practically as safe as if you use gunpowder after watering. I cannot help thinking that the water cartridge is a product highly satisfactory, and I think those who want to use high explosives should not be put to the positive proof that watering would injure the mine; I think they should be allowed to decide for themselves the course which they should adopt in mining. I beg to move the Amendment standing in my name.

Amendment proposed, line 26, leave out the words "in the case of places in which watering would injure the roof or floor."—(*Mr. Tomlinson.*)

MR. MATTHEWS: The primary object of these sub-heads is that if you are firing a shot you must water 20 yards round. Even when there is the usual percentage of gas with dust it is likely to cause an explosion; and is it not the obvious course to take to say where you have the dust you must lay it with water? And then comes these gentlemen who are represented by my hon. and learned Friend, and they say—"If you compel us to water we shall injure our mines." I say you need not water; but, if not, you must use the high explosive with water or other contrivance so as to prevent it from inflaming gas or dust. Certainly the use of a high explosive may be made perfectly safe; but in the hands of a rough workman who would not be absolutely bound down there may be sparks in one case out of 50, and therefore I say it is a concession to say that if watering injures your mine you may use the higher explosives if you use them in a particular way. I hope the hon. and learned Gentleman will not press the Amendment. I think that when people can, without spoiling their mine, water in a dusty place, they should water, and it is especially the more necessary after we have discarded the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Morpeth (Mr. Burt), who suggested the use of a smaller indicator than the safety lamp, as it was shown that two per cent of gas, plus dust, is a condition of danger.

Mr. COGHILL (Newcastle-under-Lyme): I wish to remove a misapprehension that appears to exist in regard to the water cartridge and other compounds of a gelatinous nature. In regard to this question the certificated colliery managers of North Staffordshire say—

> "Blasting by means of ordinary powder has been given up as quite unsafe in some of the mines in this district for years, but since the introduction of the gelatinous compounds and the water cartridge with electric firing apparatus, we have been employing the system for nearly two years, and at this moment its adoption is daily increasing, and not one single case of accident has occurred while some 200,000 shots have been fired. In the question of the cost the new system compares favourably with the use of powder and old fashioned fuse, and on the average the expense is no greater, while the coal is got in an equally good if not better condition; but above all is the sense of security experienced by the men and managers, owing to the killing of the flame on the explosion of every shot. We consider that the clauses on shot firing in the Bill, as drawn, are wisely drawn, and with some slight modifications should stand."

We, in North Staffordshire, prefer the Bill as it was drawn originally to the Amendments now proposed by the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary. The following is the testimony of the partner of the former Member for North Staffordshire—Mr. Cooper—who says—

> "We have been firing between 40 and 50 shots per day during the last 12 months, and in no single instance has any spark or flame ever been detected. In seams similar to the ones we are working, which are both hard to get and very fiery, and where it would be highly dangerous to use any of the ordinary explosives for blasting, it is a boon for which colliery proprietors cannot be too grateful. It is everything that is claimed for it—namely, a safety cartridge; and I shall always be pleased to bear my testimony as to its efficiency, both for safety and in getting the coal, to all I meet."

I must say it seems to me hon. Gentlemen do not quite appreciate the value of this invention, and that they do all they can to depreciate it.

Mr. BARNES (Derbyshire, Chesterfield): I have used high explosives with water cartridges for some months, and I cannot see any reason for watering; if there was any sense in it I should have done it in a moment; but it is a needless operation in the way of using water cartridges. I hope the words will be omitted.

Mr. BURT: As I think the words are unnecessary I would support the hon. Member for Preston if he went to a Division, but I leave it to his own discretion to decide whether he would press it or not.

Mr. TOMLINSON: I am not in the least convinced by what the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary has said that it is not a desirable alteration in the clause; but as I do not consider that I should receive that amount of support that would justify me in going to a Division I will not press the Amendment, but perhaps I may be allowed to reserve my right to bring the subject before the House upon Report if I should find it desirable to do so.

Mr. MATTHEWS: I heard the hon. Gentleman the Member for Morpeth (Mr. Burt) with some surprise support the Amendment of the hon. and learned Member for Preston. Does he know it is an Amendment relaxing the stringency of the rules? If these words are struck out it would allow a shot to be fired with high explosives in a highly dusty place with no watering at all. If the really practical men of the Committee are agreeable I must confess that I would not stand in the way; but I must point out that the effect of the Amendment would be to allow a shot to be fired freely in a dusty place with a high explosive without any watering at all.

Mr. WOODALL (Hanley): I believe the experience of North Staffordshire justifies us in expressing to the full our objection to the series of Amendments put by the right hon. Gentleman, and we feel that it is very hard that where we cannot deal with our mines in the way prescribed that we should not be allowed the free use of the water cartridge and gelatinous substances. I myself have seen in the use of gelatinous substances that not a particle of spark was visible, whereas in explosions with gunpowder, with every precaution taken, there has been a stream of sparks and flame. I think it is unfortunate that we should not have had the opportunity of supporting the hon. and learned Member for Preston in this very sensible Amendment, but if it is the opinion of the Committee to accept these Amendments *en bloc* I hope it will be understood that they will be challenged on Report.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Mr. TOMLINSON: The next Amendment I understand the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary is prepared to accept.

Amendment proposed, in line 28, after the word "is," to insert the word "so." —(*Mr. Tomlinson.*)

Question, "That that word be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

Further Amendment proposed, in same line, to leave out the word "so." —(*Mr. Tomlinson.*)

Question, "That that word be there left out," put, and *agreed to.*

Colonel BLUNDELL (Lancashire, S.W., Ince): I feel it is desirable to bring before the Committee the Amendment standing in my name. The object of the Amendment is to prevent blasting with powder or similar explosives taking place in fiery mines when the full number of workmen are in the mine. The Report of the Royal Commission amongst other things showed that gunpowder was more dangerous than some other explosives, and that there were certain high explosives which, whether used in the form of water cartridges or in conjunction with porus tamping soaked with water were practically safe—that is, that they gave you a mechanical security over and above that derived from personal inspection. I may mention with regard to personal inspection of mines; I put aside the possibility of carelessness through defective watering, etc., and assume that the inspection is really carefully done; but as was represented by the hon. Member for Morpeth (Mr. Burt), a short time ago, the greatest danger comes from the inaccessible places. Upon this subject I will read to the Committee an extract from an able mining engineer. He says—

> "All accessible places within 20 yards of a shot shall first be swept and then watered. The question arises, what is an accessible place? There is more danger to be apprehended from places which are inaccessible. If shots were only to be fired in narrow places a solution would be easy; but in long wall and pillar workings there are so many nooks and corners the most careful man could not investigate all of them. Our arrangement at present is, before firing any shot in a long wall or other than a narrow place to take an extincteur, and play upon the roof and sides, and into all the crevices for about 20 yards from the shot. In this way we consider we lay the dust effectively, and, at the same time, avoid the danger of charging the atmosphere with fine particles which sweeping must always do."

Thus there is still a danger that, however carefully the inspection is made, you may fail to discover the gas that exists, and that was the cause of an explosion which took place in Lancashire on May 26th last. What I would urge upon the Committee is this—When you have an explosive which affords you no security over and above the security you get from personal inspection, and that personal inspection is liable to error of all kinds; then, in my opinion, you are bound either to use a mechanical security, or remove the bulk of the men from "fiery" mines before you fire the shot.

Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment (*Mr. Secretary Matthews*) to Clause 50, pages 30 and 31, line 42, Rule 12, after Sub-section (i.), insert the following sub-section:—

> "In the case of a seam of a mine which, either by reason of the inflammable gas issuing, or by reason of the joint effect of gas and dust may be deemed a 'fiery mine,' a shot shall not be fired with gunpowder or blasting powder, or other explosive which, when used with water or other contrivance, is not prevented from inflaming gas, unless all workmen have been removed from the ventilating district in which such shot is to be fired, and the ventilating districts immediately contiguous thereto, except those necessarily employed as named in the foregoing Sub-section (i.).—(*Colonel Blundell.*)

Mr. MATTHEWS: I do not know whether the attention of hon. Members opposite has been called to this, but this is putting back with a vengeance.

Sir HUSSEY VIVIAN: I can safely say, Sir, if this Amendment were adopted, it would produce a very serious effect indeed upon our mines in South Wales. I do not think it possible to exaggerate the mischief that would arise to our collieries. This matter has been very carefully considered indeed; I have heard the testimony of both masters and men upon it, and I am quite sure that if this Amendment were to become law a very large proportion of our most valuable mines would be absolutely stopped; they could not work, it would be impossible. There was consternation on the part of the men, and as I said a short time ago some of them used this expression which I will quote again, that if the gunpowder was prohibited it would be the blackest day for South Wales they had ever known. Now, it must not be supposed by the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for the Ince Division of South West Lancashire that we are not fully sensible of the dangers that are run in mines; but we think by providing that in all places where shots are to be fired the most careful inspection shall be made to see that no gas to any dangerous amount remains, and that these places should have the dust removed from them, and then be well damped we are quite confident no danger would occur. There are large collieries in South Wales where this precaution has already been adopted for years, and in those mines where the dust has been removed and the places have been damped no explosions have ever occurred, and therefore why we should be precluded from using gunpowder under those conditions I fail to understand. The use of high explosives is not practicable in our mines; it shatters the coal too much, and we also run the risk of its shattering the roof. It is perfectly well known that by far the greater portion of fatal accidents in mines occur from the falls of the roof, and therefore if you shatter and shake the roof you run a very great risk of bringing on those serious accidents that occur from the falls of roof. We are perfectly confident that if the rule as provided by the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department is adopted that the greatest amount of safety that can be obtained will be obtained, and I therefore trust the Committee will not entertain the Amendment proposed by the hon. and gallant Gentleman.

Mr. BARNES: I trust the hon. and gallant Gentleman will withdraw the Amendment. Time is running on, and we desire to finish the clause.

Colonel BLUNDELL: I would ask leave to withdraw the Amendment; but I am glad that I had the opportunity of bringing it before the Committee, believing that time will effect a change of opinion upon the subject.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

The CHAIRMAN: The next Amendment is inadmissible.

Sir JOSEPH PEASE: I did not intend to move it, as I do not wish to give advice to the Committee that I do not follow myself; but I wish to point out to the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) that, if the advice I gave to the Committee had been taken half-an-hour ago by the right hon. Gentleman's Friends, they would have been much further forward.

Question, "That the Amendment, as amended, be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

Amendment proposed, in page 31, Rule 13, line 44, to leave out the word "twenty," and insert the word "thirty."—(*Mr. Tomlinson.*)

Question, "That that word be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

Mr. BURT (Morpeth): I beg to move to add, after Rule 15, the following:—

"There shall be at least two proper travelling ways into every engine room and boiler gallery in coal and other mines."

Amendment proposed,

In page 28, line 12, after general rule 15, add —"There shall be at least two proper travelling ways into every engine room and boiler gallery in coal and other mines."—(*Mr. Burt.*)

Mr. CONYBEARE: May I ask whether we are on the 2nd Amendment?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member did not move it.

Mr. BURT (Morpeth): I have had my attention called to cases in which very serious accidents have occurred owing to the want of these travelling ways, and I think it very desirable that the question should be considered.

The CHAIRMAN: I have to put the Amendment.

Amendment proposed,

In page 28, line 12, after general rule 15, add the words "There shall be at least two proper travelling ways into every engine room and boiler gallery in coal and other mines."

MR. MATTHEWS: I do not see any objection to the insertion of the words proposed by the hon. Member, except that they require some modification; otherwise, I think there should be two travelling ways.

MR. BURT: I understand from the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary that he is willing to accept the principle of my Amendment, which has emanated from some of the enginemen, many of whom attach great importance to it.

MR. BARNES: I should like to know exactly what it is the hon. Member (Mr. Burt) means by this Amendment. There may be an engine-room in which the work is done by compressed air. I suppose the hon. Gentleman only means where there is steam. I will therefore move that the word "steam" be inserted after the word "every" and before the words "engine-room," in the hon. Member's Amendment.

Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment, by inserting the word "steam" before the words "engine-room."

Question, "That that word be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

THE CHAIRMAN: I think the words "and other" ought to be omitted.

MR. BARNES: I move that the words "and other" be omitted.

Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment, by omitting the words "and other," before the word "mines."

Question, "That those words be there omitted," put, and *agreed to.*

Proposed Amendment, as amended, put, and *agreed to.*

MR. WOODALL (Hanley): I have a very small Amendment, of a purely verbal character, to propose—namely, after the word "place," in line 13, page 32, to insert the words "of refuge."

Amendment proposed, in page 32, line 13, after the word "place," insert the words "of refuge."

Question, "That those words be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

MR. WOOTTON ISAACSON (Tower Hamlets, Stepney): There is an Amendment standing in my name which I think should come in here. I apprehend that the Bill now before the Committee has been framed for the purpose of minimizing the number of accidents and deaths that occur in mines, and my Amendment is intended to assist in securing that result.

MR. BURT (Morpeth): I rise to Order. I do not know whether there has not been some misunderstanding with regard to a second Amendment of mine preceding that of the hon. Member for the Stepney Division of the Tower Hamlets (Mr. Isaacson). I desire to move that Amendment. It is to insert, after the word "bottom," in Rule 19, line 22, the words "including the sump, if any."

Amendment proposed, in page 32, line 22, after the word "bottom," insert the words "including the sump, if any."

Question, "That those words be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

MR. WOOTTON ISAACSON: I will now resume the observations I was making when the hon. Member for Morpeth (Mr. Burt) interposed, as he had a perfect right to do. I think the Committee will agree with me, and, I assume, with every hon. Member representing South Wales, that, taking into consideration the tremendous loss of life which occurred in the Risca Valley in the year 1881, my Amendment, had it been part of the law for the regulation of mines at that period, would have been the means of preventing that calamity, which resulted in the sacrifice of no fewer than 164 lives. The effect of this Amendment would be to provide that there shall be three consecutive shifts in all mines—namely, two shifts of eight hours for the men who go down to fill the coal, and a further shift of eight hours for men to ventilate and clear the mines. Had such a provision been enacted in former days, as I have already stated, the serious disaster to which I have referred would not have happened.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member is hardly speaking to the Amendment he has upon the Paper.

MR. WOOTTON ISAACSON: I have only adopted the line pursued by other hon. Members of prefacing my remarks by an illustration—a course which generally appears to be acceptable to the Committee. What I am desirous of bringing before the Committee is a proposal by which a number of specially skilled workmen should be told off for the purpose of ventilating each mine, there being two other shifts for working and filling the coal. This plan, I believe, has never been adopted in the mines of South Wales, although I am well aware that it has been carried out in the North. I am speaking in the presence of hon. Members who have an intimate acquaintance with mining operations, and I have no doubt they will agree with this very sensible and proper Amendment. I do not think that the Bill introduced by the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary will be a perfect measure unless this provision is inserted. I trust, therefore, that it will meet with the acceptance of the right hon. Gentleman and be carried without a Division. I beg to move, as an Amendment to Rule 22, the insertion, at the end of the Rule, of the following words—"That the safety of the working places shall be insured by specially skilled men told off for that purpose."

Amendment proposed,

In page 32, Rule 22, line 32, at end, to add the words "that the safety of the working places shall be insured by specially skilled men told off for that purpose."—(*Mr. Wootton Isaacson.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I would point out to the hon. Member that in Rule 4 we agreed to the whole substance of his Amendment.

MR. WOOTTON ISAACSON: In that case I will withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): I have a small verbal Amendment to propose—namely, in line 34 of page 32, to insert, after the word "workmen," the words "employed therein."

Amendment proposed, in page 32, Rule 22, line 34, after the word "workmen," insert the words "employed therein."—(*Mr. Tomlinson.*)

Question, "That those words be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I have an Amendment to move which I have not had an opportunity of putting upon the Paper. It is an addition to the Rule——

MR. TOMLINSON: Before the hon. Member proposes his Amendment I have one which takes precedence of it. It relates to a matter which has excited a good deal of discussion. It is, after the word "provided," in Rule 22, line 34, to insert the words "at the working place, or, if that be not convenient, then at the gate-end, pass-bye, or other similar place in the mine convenient to the workmen," and to leave out the words "in the mine at places convenient to the workmen."

THE CHAIRMAN: The Amendment will be to leave out the words "in the mine at places convenient to the workmen," in order to insert the words "at the working place, or, if that be not convenient, then at the gate-end, pass-bye, or other similar place in the mine convenient to the workmen."

Amendment proposed,

In page 32, Rule 22, line 34, after the word "provided," to leave out the words "in the mine at places convenient to the workmen," and insert instead thereof the words "at the working place, or, if that be not convenient, then at the gate-end, pass-bye, or other similar place in the mine convenient to the workmen."—(*Mr. Tomlinson.*)

Question, "That those words be there left out," put, and *agreed to.*

Question proposed, "That the words proposed be there inserted."

MR. MATTHEWS: I do not know whether it would meet the views of the hon. and learned Member for Preston (Mr. Tomlinson) or the hon. Member for Morpeth (Mr. Burt), who has a similar Amendment, to take it in this shape—"at the working place, gate-end, pass-bye, or other similar place in the mine convenient to the workmen." This would simply entail the striking out of the Amendment, from the position in which they stand, the words "or, if that be not convenient, then at the gate-end."

MR. J. B. BALFOUR (Clackmannan, &c.): I would point out that the term "pass-bye" is one that is not familiar to the miners of Scotland, and I would suggest that, in order to make it clear to them, the word "siding" should be inserted in substitution for the word "pass-bye."

MR. MATTHEWS: I do not see any objection to that.

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: May I ask you, Sir, to read the Amendment again?

The CHAIRMAN: I will read it in the amended form. It stands thus—Clause 50, page 32, line 34, after the word "provided," insert the words "at the working place, gate-end, pass-bye, or other similar place in the mine convenient to the workmen."

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR (Clackmannan, &c.): Then, I will move the insertion of the word "siding" after the word "pass-bye."

Mr. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck): Perhaps the Committee will allow me to point out that the words which the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary proposes to insert instead of the words of the proposed Amendment would have the effect of weakening the provision considerably. Our object is to secure that the timber cut in proper lengths should, in the first instance, be put in the working place, and, if that be not convenient, then we are content to have it placed at the gate-end, or pass-bye; but we are desirous that, where it is convenient, the timber so cut shall be put in the working place.

The CHAIRMAN: Do the Committee accept the Amendment in the amended form?

Mr. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck): I give notice that, on the Report stage of the Bill, I will move to reinsert the Amendment in its original form.

Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment, that the word "siding" be inserted after the word "pass-bye."—(*Mr. J. B. Balfour.*)

Question, "That that word be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

Amendment, as amended, proposed,

> In page 32, line 34, after the word "provided," insert the words "at the working place, gate-end, pass-bye, siding, or other similar place in the mine convenient to the workmen."—(*Mr. Matthews.*)

Question, "That those words be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: I would suggest that, after the word "mine," it would be better to have the words "most convenient."

Mr. MATTHEWS: The gate-end would be convenient; and I do not think the addition would be required.

Mr. W. ABRAHAM (Glamorgan, Rhondda): I should like to know whether it would be in Order to move the reinsertion of the original words now?

The CHAIRMAN: No; it cannot be done now, because the word "siding" has been inserted subsequent to those words.

Mr. W. ABRAHAM: I desire, then, to move the Amendment which stands in my name. It is, after the words "holding props," in line 36, Rule 22, to add the words "where they are required."

Amendment proposed, in page 32, Rule 22, line 36, after the words "holding props," insert the words "where they are required."—(*Mr. W. Abraham.*)

Question, "That those words be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I desire now, Sir, to move an addition to Rule 23, if this be the proper time.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes; the hon. Member may move his Amendment now.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: The Amendment I wish to move is, as I have been assured, one in regard to which a very considerable amount of interest is felt, especially among the miners in the North. It is to add to Rule 23 these words—

> "Provided that where inflammable gas has been found in a mine no miner or other workman shall ascend or descend the upcast shaft unless the downcast shaft shall, by reason of accident, or otherwise, be unavailable."

I am quite sure that those hon. Members who have any knowledge of the difference between the upcast and the downcast shafts, and who have any idea of what it is to be in the upcast shaft, will at once appreciate the reason for moving this Amendment. One might almost as well be up a chimney as be in an upcast shaft, and be detained there for any space of time, as many of these miners sometimes are. The workmen, consequently, desire to be secured in their right to ascend and descend by the downcast shaft, in which the air is fresh, and is not charged with all kinds of noxious gases, especially carbonic acid gas.

Amendment proposed,

> At end of rule 23, page 32, to add the words, "Provided that where inflammable gas has been

found in a mine, no miner or other workman shall ascend or descend the upcast shaft, unless the downcast shaft shall, by reason of accident or otherwise be unavailable."—(*Mr. Arthur O'Connor.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): I do not think, as far as I am acquainted with the working of mines, that the workmen would be obliged to use the upcast shaft, and therefore I do not see the necessity for this Amendment.

MR. BURT (Morpeth): It is a very unusual thing for the workmen to be in the upcast shaft; but at the same time, as it is very undesirable that they should be compelled to use the upcast shaft I strongly support the Amendment, which I hope the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary will accept.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I must confess that I can hardly understand the necessity for this Amendment. Rule 23 gives the workmen the option of using the downcast shaft.

MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.W.): I desire to say a word in support of the Amendment of my hon. Friend; and if there is any difficulty about accepting it, I hope the hon. Member will press it to a Division in order to test the opinion of the Committee upon it.

MR. W. ABRAHAM (Glamorgan, Rhondda): I would remind the Committee that a similar Amendment has been on the Paper for weeks in the name of the hon. Member for the Eastern Division of Glamorganshire (Mr. A. Thomas).

SIR RICHARD PAGET (Somerset, Wells): That is so. There is an exactly similar Amendment on page 31 of the Amendment Paper.

MR. BARNES (Chesterfield): I think that if this Amendment is to be adopted, it should be made simply prospective, as applicable only to new collieries, and not to those now in existence. I may refer to a case of my own, where the downcast shaft runs to one seam, and the upcast shaft to another.

MR. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck): I may be permitted to inform hon. Members who have spoken on this Amendment that all shafts are not 16 feet in width, and that it is a very great inconvenience to the workmen to have to ascend or descend by the upcast shaft, when the furnace is burning underneath them. In case of any mishap to the machinery, which might cause the cage to be stopped in the shaft, and compel the man in it to hang over the smoke ascending from the furnace for any length of time would be exceedingly objectionable. In saying this, I am speaking from experience, and I must add that the miners have a very strong objection, either to ascend or descend by the upcast shaft when the furnace is lighted below, unless it be in case of some emergency, such as when an accident has taken place in connection with the downcast shaft. Seeing that the Amendment has now been on the Paper for a considerable time, I hope the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary will not offer any excuse for passing it over, but that he will be prepared to accept it.

MR. MATTHEWS: What I say with regard to this Amendment is, that it is totally unnecessary to forbid the use of the upcast shaft. As I have already stated, Rule 23 gives every workman the right to use the downcast shaft, and I cannot see why the men should be forbidden to use the upcast shaft. If a miner is willing to descend or ascend by the upcast shaft, why should he not do so? At any rate, the rule gives him the option. I cannot understand the necessity for all these minute regulations in an Act of Parliament, where a general right is conferred.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: It is all very well to say in this House that the men may assert their right; but will they always do so? We know that in a coal mine, as elsewhere, there are men of different nervous constitutions, and there are some of them who do not care to assert their rights against the danger of their not being needed for further service in a mine. There are hundreds and thousands of cases in which, as the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary must know from his acquaintance with Staffordshire—if his knowledge of the coal district there extends below the surface of the ground—the men dare not assert their rights. Therefore, I say it is all very well to say that the Bill gives the miner the right to claim to ascend or descend by the downcast shaft; but the miners know that it would often-times be a very unwise thing for them to assert many of the rights which this Bill is supposed to confer. What I propose by this Amendment is that the miners shall as a rule and as a right ascend and descend by the downcast shaft, in order that they may not be compelled to submit to the inconvenience and danger of ascending or descending by the upcast shaft. What I desire is to secure to the men all the reasonable right that can be secured by this Bill; and therefore an absolute provision of this kind is necessary, because the mere option conferred upon them by the Bill as it stands does not give them that security.

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I desire to say a word in corroboration of the argument of my hon. Friend. Rule 23 merely gives the men the right to use the downcast shaft "on giving reasonable notice." The words are—

> "Where there is a downcast and a furnace shaft at the same time, and both shafts are provided with apparatus in use for raising and lowering persons, every person employed in the mine shall, on giving reasonable notice, have the option of using the downcast shaft."

It is obvious that any person giving reasonable notice must go to the manager or agent for that purpose, and it appears to me that, under these circumstances, the men would be almost, if not entirely, in the hands of their employers with regard to the operation of this rule.

Mr. BARNES: I think that if the hon. Member who has just spoken had anything to do with collieries, he would soon find that the men will not be dictated to on these matters. They will go down and come up the way they think the proper and correct way. The rule as it stands will give them every opportunity of going one way or the other, and that I think they ought to have; but I cannot see why they should not have the option which is here provided for. I would certainly urge that if the Amendment is to be adopted, it ought to be made prospective only.

Mr. WOOTTON ISAACSON (Tower Hamlets, Stepney): There are many things in collieries that cannot be regulated by Act of Parliament. They must be left to the men themselves, and also to their employers; and I am sure that no employer would ever insist on his men using the upcast shaft if it was not necessary. I think that if anything can be done with this Amendment, it should be done on the Report. Then, perhaps, hon. Members would know more about it. I do not think that hon. Members who are not colliery proprietors now understand the meaning of the Amendment. And I am fully convinced that the hon. Member for East Donegal (Mr. Arthur O'Connor), at all events, does not understand the wording of the Amendment as regards colliery proprietors.

Mr. W. ABRAHAM: This Amendment represents the unanimous desire of the colliers of the United Kingdom, expressed at one of their conferences. It is sent here by them, and it is their unanimous wish that it should be adopted.

Mr. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM: I submit that the Amendment has not been read yet. The Amendment is that miners should not be permitted to ascend and descend the upcast shaft when the furnace is used.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member is quite unaware what the Amendment is. The Amendment before the Committee is this. It is proposed to add to Rule 22 these words—

> "Provided, that where inflammable gas has been found in a mine no miner or workman shall ascend or descend the upcast shaft unless the downcast shaft, by reason of accident or otherwise, shall not be available."

Mr. MASON (Lanark, Mid): I intend to support the Amendment, and I do so from the experience I have had. I think it very right and proper that the upcast shaft should not be used either for lowering men down or for their ascent. I do not think the other Amendment which follows would apply, not only for the reasons that have already been given, but because it is necessary that the upcast shaft should be kept clear. It may be said that it should only be used for ventilating purposes. However, I do not go so far as that. It may be used to bring up mineral; but it should not be used to lower or bring up men. I trust, therefore, that the Committee will agree to the Amendment of the hon. Member for East Donegal (Mr. Arthur O'Connor.)

Mr. FENWICK: I would suggest to the hon. Member (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) that he should withdraw the Amendment; and then I will move the Amendment which stands on page 31 of the Amendments in the name of the Member for East Glamorganshire (Mr. A. Thomas), as an addition to Rule 23.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: My great desire is to make this Bill, in the interest of the miners, as good as possible. I may not be conversant with the details of collieries; but I have endeavoured, to the best of my power, to master the subject, and if there are any shortcomings on my part I am very sorry for it. In deference to the opinion of the hon. Member who has just sat down, and of the hon. Member for the Rhondda Division of Glamorganshire (Mr. W. Abraham), who agrees with him, I shall have no difficulty in asking leave to withdraw my Amendment, on the understanding that it will then be competent to move, as an addition to the clause, the Amendment which stands on page 31, in the name of the Member for Glamorganshire (Mr. A. Thomas).

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Amendment proposed,

In page 32, line 42, at the end of Rule 23, to insert the words—"Provided that miners shall not be permitted to descend or ascend the upcast shaft when a furnace is used, unless when, through accident, the downcast shaft is not available."—(*Mr. Fenwick.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. MASON: I beg to move that the words "when a furnace is used" be omitted.

Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment, to leave out the words, "when a furnace is used."—(*Mr. Mason.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the proposed Amendment."

MR. JOICEY (Chester-le-Street, Durham): I quite admit that an upcast shaft should not be used for the ascent or descent of miners when a furnace is used. I know of no mine where miners use the upcast shaft, except some old mines where it is inconvenient to use the downcast shaft to put men down. However, that inconvenience is not great, as it merely involves a new engine being put down. I hope, however, that the Committee will not accept the Amendment as to the furnace.

SIR JOSEPH PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): I have no objection to the Amendment of it be made prospective, but it would be difficult to adjust it to existing collieries.

Amendment and proposed Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Question again proposed,

"That the words, 'Provided, that miners shall not be permitted to descend or ascend the upcast shaft when a furnace is used, unless when through accident the downcast shaft is not available,' be there inserted."

MR. TOMLINSON: I do not think there can be any wish on the part of any miners to throw the system of working collieries into confusion. If it is desired that arrangements should in future be made, whereby it can be possible for workmen to come up the downcast shaft, let that be provided for in the future. But, as to existing collieries, let men have the option of coming up or going down by the upcast or the downcast shaft If they do not object to coming up or going down the upcast shaft, why interfere?

MR. CONYBEARE: It is not a question of men not objecting. It is well known to those who are conversant with what happens under ground, that when men object they lose their places. ["No, no!"] Yes; I am speaking of what I know. In Stirlingshire you will find that there is a victimization of that sort. We do not have the same difficulties as to upcast and downcast shafts in Cornwall, but there is the same difficulty as to the pressure brought to bear on men by their employers; and I know, from the miners in Scotland, that men do require an emphatic protection of this kind to prevent their losing their places, if they refuse to go up the upcast shaft at the bidding of their employers.

MR. HANDEL COSSHAM (Bristol, E.): There are two objections to this Amendment. I think it is objectionable to treat men as babies. The colliers of this country are a superior class of men, and they would not submit, in the way some hon. Members suppose, to anything like imposition. I think, therefore, that a clause giving the men the option of using or refusing to use the upcast shaft would be quite sufficient. But then there is another point. If the rule is made rigid, and you say that no men shall be brought up or go down the upcast shaft, many thousands of men would be thrown out of work. That, I am sure, the Committee do not desire.

Question put,

The Committee *divided:*—Ayes 84; Noes 122: Majority 38.—(Div. List, No. 387.) [12.40 P.M.]

Amendment proposed, in page 32, Rule 24, line 43, after the word "mine," to insert the words "not provided with a travelling outlet or drift."—(*Mr. Tomlinson.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): The hon. Member can hardly expect us to assent to this Amendment without an explanation of its drift.

MR. TOMLINSON: Rule 24 provides that—

> "In any mine which is usually entered by means of machinery, a competent male person, not less than 18 years of age, shall be appointed for the purpose of working the machinery which is employed in lowering or raising persons therein, and shall attend for that purpose during the whole time that any person is below ground in the mine."

Now, there are certain mines which have one shaft and a drift, and it is customary for men to descend by the shaft and come out by the drift. In that case, the proposed rule will not be necessary.

MR. MATTHEWS: In that case the rule will not apply. If there be a drift by which men can walk up and down, there need be no machinery to lower them or to draw them up.

Question put, and *negatived.*

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) then proposed in page 32, line 44, to leave out "a competent male person," and to insert "two competent male persons of." The hon. Member said: This Amendment is also one to which the workmen attach great importance. It is intended to secure that those who have charge of machinery should not be unqualified boys of no experience, or of an experience merely nominal. It is only right that a man who is put in charge of an engine should have some experience of boilers beforehand, and if you have a person in charge of an engine of only 18 years of age, the chances are that he is not qualified, as he may reasonably be expected to be qualified, to take charge of the working of machinery which it is important should be entrusted to competent hands. To leave machinery on which lives depend in the charge of a person only 18 years of age is not to take reasonable security against accident. And if you have not only people of 18, but only one of them at a time in charge of an engine, you may run considerable risk. I therefore propose that instead of one male person of 18 years of age being in charge of an engine there shall be at least two persons whose competence is established, and who shall be of an age to have a competent acquaintance with machinery. I beg leave, therefore, now to move the Amendment which I have already submitted to the Committee with a view to moving later on a further Amendment as to the age of the persons in charge of machinery.

Amendment proposed, in page 32, line 44, to leave out the words "a competent male person," and insert the words, "two competent male persons."—(*Mr. Arthur O' Connor.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'a competent male person' stand part of the Clause."

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): I cannot think the Secretary of State will allow an Amendment of this importance to pass by without a word of comment. This Amendment is recommended to us by the workmen who have discussed the question. I would call the attention of the Secretary of State to the fact that one of the worst accidents we have recently had was caused by the absence of the precautions which it is the object of this Amendment to provide. Ten persons were coming up a shaft, and only one person was in charge of the engine. That person was struck on the head and was thus rendered unable to attend to the engine, and the consequence was that all the men who were coming up the shaft were either injured or killed. When we have regard to such a calamity as this, which spread sorrow and horror through the country, I put it to the Committee whether we should not take steps to prevent the recurrence of such a calamity. The hon. Members who represent the colliers are strongly in favour of it, and would have risen to say so, if they had not expected from the Home Secretary some observations in opposition to, or in support of the Amendment.

Mr. PICKARD (York, W.R., Normanton): I hope that the Home Secretary will accept the Amendment, for when we have large bodies of men going down deep mines and have such powerful engines as those which are in use at the present day, it is absolutely necessary in order to prevent any accident that these engines should be in charge of more than one person.

Mr. BROOKE ROBINSON (Dudley): This is an instance of what I have before mentioned, of the extreme difficulty of drawing hard-and-fast lines. The hon. Member refers to large mines and powerful engines; but does he seriously propose that with a little bit of a colliery, with not a dozen men in the mine, it shall be incumbent to have two men in the engine-house?

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): One word in support of the Amendment. This Amendment of the hon. Member for East Donegal (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) has the support of the leading journals connected with labour, in the country, and I have in my hand an extract from one of these journals, referring to this important Amendment. Now, that is one, and I think not an unimportant piece of evidence in support of this Amendment; but another is this. I do not think the hon. Member who moved the Amendment brought forward in its favour one argument which I believe to be most important and cogent. That is that if you have only one man in charge of machinery, an accident may happen to that one man, and then the most serious or even fatal consequences may ensue. I am now speaking of a matter that I know about. There was a case some little time ago where one man had charge of a winding-up engine and he fell down in a fit. There was no one to attend to him, or to the engine, and the consequence was that the engine was over-wound, and that a serious accident occurred. When the lives of men are at stake from accidents, the possible or probable occurrence of which no one can foresee, it is imperative that provision should as far as possible be made against such accidents.

Mr. LLEWELLYN (Somerset, N.): There is a great deal in what the hon. Member for East Donegal (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) proposes. In a small mine, however, it appears to me to be unnecessary to have two men in the engine room, but where you have large engines of many horse power it is probably necessary to have more than one to attend them. As to the second Amendment, it appears to me that it would be better if it provided for one man of experience and another one learning the work instead of "two competent male persons." I think, however, there is something in what the hon. Member proposes, and if he would alter his Amendment so as to make it read that engines of a certain power should have two persons to attend to them, and smaller engines only one person, I should agree to it.

Mr. BARNES (Derbyshire, Chesterfield): I must express my surprise at what has been said on this matter. One engine is quite enough for a large mine, and one man is quite competent to attend to it. It is absolutely unnecessary to have two.

Mr. CONYBEARE: Suppose there is an accident in a mine and that one man is hurt.

Mr. BARNES: Well, if such a thing should happen, the second man would not be able to take his place. The thing would be over in an instant. An accident would happen before the second man could prevent it.

Mr. HANDEL COSSHAM (Bristol, E.): I have had 40 years' experience of coal mines, and from that experience I can say that if you want to prevent accidents of any kind in connection with machinery, take the precaution of only employing your men for a short time. I never allow my engine-men to work for more than eight hours. I have 1,500 men constantly employed, and I never recollect having had an accident in the engine house. Two men cannot possibly work an engine—two men could not be in reach of the machines at the same time.

Mr. JOICEY (Durham, Chester-le-Street): Undoubtedly an engine-man handling an engine at one of our mines requires to have his attention constantly fixed upon his work. If there were two men in an engine house, depend upon it the attention of neither of them would be constantly fixed upon his work—the presence of a companion would have a tendency to distract the attention of the man really in charge of the engine from his work. If you have two men in an engine house, instead of decreasing the risk of accident you will be largely increasing it. At present there are at our collieries very strict rules preventing any man but the engine-man going into the engine room. The one man sees the cages come up and go down, he fixes his attention closely upon the engine and the cage, he is alive to his great responsibility, and everything that would tend in any way to draw his attention from these matters will increase the risk of serious accident.

MR. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck): It is not intended by this Amendment that there should be two men minding the engine. As I understand it, the intention of the hon. Gentleman the Mover of the Amendment is to provide that there shall be two men in the engine house, so that if an accident happens, and the engine-man is disabled, there shall be a second person present who will be afforded an opportunity of taking the handles and managing the cage. In the event of an accident happening to the ordinary brakesman you will have a second one at hand. What is done in the North of England is this: during the time the colliers are ascending or descending the shaft, the man who manages the boiler attends in the engine house in addition to the brakesman. He is not supposed to take any part in the winding or in the management of the engine while everything is going on right. The brakesman is there, and has complete charge of the engine, but the boiler man or stoker is there as a substitute in case an accident occurs. I think the suggestion of the hon. Member for East Donegal is well worthy of consideration, and that it is necessary to have two competent engine drivers in every engine room. In some places where there are not a large number of men employed, and there is not a large amount of work to do, one man might be sufficient, and in other cases I would not say that both need be over 21 or 22 years of age, but I do say that in a large mine whilst the men are ascending and descending there should be a second person present capable of taking the management of the engine for a few moments in the event of any accident occurring to the brakesman. If anything unusual happens to the recognized brakesman a second person should have an opportunity if possible of taking hold of the handles and stopping the engine. It is with that view that I understand the Amendment is proposed, and I have no doubt the hon. Member who has brought it forward is quite prepared to accept some modification of it provided the general principle is secured.

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): It appears to me that the object of this rule is misunderstood. It is not a rule intended to prescribe how the men shall work, but to provide that there shall be someone in the engine room capable of rendering service—that the men shall not be left at the bottom of the pit without having someone at hand to draw up the cage. The rule does not propose to tie down managers to hard-and-fast lines. Something must be left to the discretion of managers. I must protest against the whole tenor of the observations of some of the hon. Members opposite. They seem to think that it is the only object and desire of the owners of coal mines to wreck their collieries, and to bring ruin and disaster upon themselves and those they employ.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I must say that it is with a feeling closely akin to despair that we in this quarter of the House find that whatever Amendment we bring forward is opposed by the same set of men, and that the Government does not attempt to contribute anything towards the discussion, and is content to vote without weighing our statements—at any rate, without laying before us their appreciation of the arguments which have been used on one side and the other. Let me say that, in moving this Amendment, my only desire is to take precautions to secure the safety of the lives of the men ascending and descending the shafts of our coal mines, so far as such security can be reasonably effected. I am perfectly prepared to accept Amendments or suggestions brought forward by hon. Gentlemen sitting on the Benches opposite. I doubt very much whether many hon. Members of this House really apprehend the manifold duties which these men in charge of the machinery have to discharge. I will ask indulgence while, in a few words, I state one or two facts concerning these duties. There are special rules laid down defining the work of the engine-man; and these are amongst the things which he has to do in a good pit. The engine-man at the pit head during the hours of his shift has to remain continually in charge of or near his engine, so as to have it constantly under control; he must take care that his engine is in good condition; he must take care that the pumps and all parts of the machinery are in perfect order; he must see that every fly-wheel and every dangerous part of the engine is protected; he has to superintend the work of the furnace-man, in order to see that steam is properly kept up; he has to be perfectly acquainted with and attend to the signals for the raising or lowering of men or materials; he has to give an eye to the cages, and to see that they are in proper condition; he is prohibited from allowing any person to have anything to do with the engine in any way whilst it is being worked; and there is half-a-page of the rules devoted to his duties in connection with signalling. This will give some notion of the very great responsibilities thrown upon the man in charge of the engine. Well, all I ask is that this man shall not be left absolutely alone, especially in cases where there are a very large number of persons employed in the pit. I think the suggestion of the hon. Gentleman opposite is a very reasonable one. There is no reason why a boy or an apprentice between the ages of 18 and 20 should not be employed with the regular brakesman. I should be willing to accept an Amendment in the sense of the observations of the hon. Member; but I must submit that I move this Amendment in the interests of the safety of the colliers, and that I attach great importance to the proposal.

SIR HUSSEY VIVIAN (Swansea, District): I think it must be within the experience of every practical man that a divided responsibility is about as bad a thing as you could possibly have. The hon. Gentleman says that all the opposition to the proposals which are made from that quarter of the House—especially, I presume, those which he makes himself—comes from a certain number of Members in this House.

An hon. MEMBER: Not on this side.

SIR HUSSEY VIVIAN: I did not say that the hon. Member declared that the opposition came from a certain section on this side. The proposals of the hon. Member who has moved this Amendment are philosophical and theoretical, rather than practical; and I think those who know anything about mines will agree with me that very little importance is to be attached to any of the Amendments which have proceeded from him. I must say that I think it would be a very undesirable thing that a boy of 18 should be appointed to divide responsibility with an experienced engine-man, who is charged with the very delicate and difficult operation of lowering men down and winding men up the shafts of a coal mine. What we want is to prevent the attention of the engine-men being called off from the special duties they have to perform; and we think it is of the utmost importance that no one should be in the engine room to divert his attention from his work. If you give the engine-man a boy of 18 to be alongside of him, and to be perpetually about the engine room, it might be a very undesirable thing. The various duties that the hon. Member (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) has quoted from the special rules are duties that necessarily devolve on the engine-man, and cannot be deputed. Those duties confided to a boy of 18 years of age would, in my opinion, cause very great danger, and lead to more accidents than presently are likely to occur from the very exceptional case of some accident occurring precisely at the time he is winding up.

MR. W. ABRAHAM (Glamorgan, Rhondda): I am sorry to hear these words from the lips of the hon. Baronet. As to divided responsibility, we advocate nothing of the kind. The second man is not asked to be there only during the time that the men are ascending or descending the shaft; and I must say again that in this case we are only asking the few employers to adopt that which a number of the best employers do already. At large collieries the hon. Baronet must be aware that there are 18 men ascending and descending the shaft at a time. Then, considering that you have 18 lives to be risked to the hands of one man, who may be struck down accidentally, as in the case already cited, I think we are not asking too much. The largest collieries in my district are adopting this provision also; and I do not think, when you consider the number of lives that these men have in their care, that we are asking anything but what is reasonable. We do not ask for boys of 18. The Amendment of my hon. Friend the Member for East Donegal is that competent male persons should be appointed. As far as the age of 18 goes, he proposes, by his next Amendment, that 18 should be left out, in order to insert 22. Therefore the argument as to boys of 18 does not affect this matter at all. I hope the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State will see his way clear to work out the Amendment.

Mr. F. S. POWELL (Wigan): I hope the Committee will allow me to recall their recollection to certain passages in the Report of the Royal Commission upon Accidents in Mines, in dealing with this subject. No one can doubt that this Report does point out dangers, and is fully alive to the risk of the miner's occupation; but when they come to deal with the question of the risk of movement through shafts, their language is of a totally different character. They use these words—

> "There is, perhaps, in the whole range of engineering nothing more remarkable than the small number of accidents which attend the lowering and raising of some 420,000 persons every day through shafts."

And then in the next sentence they say that in one colliery in Wales nearly 6,000,000 persons have gone down and been brought up in the course of 20 years without one single accident. With that result of a careful inquiry of a Royal Commission before us, we must, I think, while fully sympathizing with the desire of those who labour in these collieries, to deal with the risk and danger, at least admit——

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: Had not they two men at that colliery?

Mr. F. S. POWELL: I will come to that in a moment. When, I say, we find that is the result of careful inquiry by a Royal Commission, we must feel that, as regards the risk of raising and lowering through shafts, the way in which the process is conducted is consistent with safety. The hon. Gentleman the Member for East Donegal, who interrupted me just now, says that in a particular case to which I alluded in quoting from the Report of the Royal Commission, there were two men employed. But the argument is still the same. Those who conduct these mines use efficient arrangements, and the business is conducted so far in a perfectly safe manner; and that really brings about the point I was about to mention—namely, that the colliery managers may be left to conduct their business in this particular, according to the rules suggested by their experience. And I must be allowed once more to say, as I have said before, that there is a desire on the part of the owners of these collieries to conduct their business in such a manner as to make safe the lives of their workmen.

Sir JOSEPH PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): If the point of hon. Gentlemen be that the appointment of two enginemen to every colliery would add to the safety of human life, I should certainly respond to it, but that I feel certain there is nothing of the kind required. The figures read out by my hon. Friend the Member for Wigan (Mr. F. S. Powell) prove how seldom accidents occur in mines in this way. Overhauling is now completely guarded against by a very plain and simple mechanical apparatus, which I have seen over and over again tried. If, therefore, in the case of the accident to which allusion has been made there had been a dozen enginemen in the room, I do not believe there would have been the least chance of their preventing the accident. I believe, with my hon. Friend behind me, that although you had two persons—a boy and an older person—in the engine room, the younger person would have to do all the work possible, while the other would look on, because it is human nature, when a boy is employed, to make him do the work. Thus the young man would have to do the work, while the comparatively older man would be looking on. The hon. Gentleman the Member for the Rhondda Division of Glamorgan (Mr. W. Abraham) said the two men were only wanted during the time the colliers were being raised and lowered; but that really meant that they would have to be engaged during the whole time persons were below, and that was the time when the inspection began in the morning until the time the men left the pit at night. If two enginemen were required where 500 men went down, they would be required for collieries where 100, 70, and 50 men went down; indeed, the Amendment would embrace collieries of all descriptions, in order to avoid a comparatively imaginary danger. All I will say is this. We are accustomed to risk our lives; 18 or 20 people together in various public conveyances, where there is only one man in charge; and I should not have the slightest hesitation in going into any colliery cage in the County of Durham, and being lowered with one man in the engine room, and in the same circumstances being brought back to the bank. I would far rather there was one man to look after this work than two.

MR. BROADHURST (Nottingham, W.): I think, Mr. Courtney, the Government might assist in bringing this debate to a close if they would get up and state the course they intend to take in regard to this Amendment. I should like to say that there is a very great deal to be said in favour of the suggestion of my hon. Friend the Member for East Donegal, and especially as it is proposed to be amended by the hon. Gentleman the Member for North Somerset (Mr. Llewellyn). With regard to the distraction of attention mentioned by the hon. Gentleman behind me, exactly the same argument might be applied to the case of the stoker and driver of a railway locomotive. I am sure there is no hon. Gentleman in this House would care to ride in a railway train at the rate of 50 miles an hour, unless he knew there was the stoker to take the place of the driver in case of accident or sudden illness.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): With reference to the illustration of the hon. Gentleman the Member for West Nottingham (Mr. Broadhurst), the stoker does not discharge the duties of an engine driver on a railway locomotive.

MR. BROADHURST: In the case of accident.

MR. MATTHEWS: But the Amendment says there shall be two competent men in the engine room, whose sole business would be to attend to the engine. At any rate, that is the Amendment as I gather it from the Paper. And I assure the Committee that it was only because I have been speaking too often this evening, and not out of disrespect for the Amendment, or the subject, with which it deals, that I have not risen sooner. It seems to me however, that the subject has been more than sufficiently discussed by hon. Gentleman of all shades of opinion. I shall vote against the Amendment if it is pressed. It seems to me the condition it imposes is not necessary in every mine in the country. We have engines in steamships and locomotives on railways driven by one man for a number of hours together. Perhaps in some cases it might be safer to have two men; but in certain particular cases there was no doubt extra precautions would be taken. Why, you might have a spare footman and a spare coachman on the back of your coach if you were to carry this out to its logical conclusion.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I have listened with some curiosity to see whether some colliery proprietor would not propose that the engine should work itself, and that there should be no engine man at all. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Wigan (Mr. F. S. Powell) said we ought to leave all these matters of precaution to colliery proprietors and colliery managers.

MR. F. S. POWELL: No, I did not say that.

MR. LABOUCHERE: Yes; I certainly understood him to say so. What is the object of this Bill? It is precisely that we are not prepared to so leave matters. This is a practical question. It is a question which concerns the lives and the safety of the men who work under ground. To whom ought we to go to learn what is at fault? Why, to the men themselves—men in this House who have been engaged in these mines, and who represent miners — there are four of them who have spoken—and they are all of opinion that it is necessary for the safety of the men that there should be two men in the engine room in the circumstances under consideration. That being so, it seems to me a monstrous thing that the Government should not assent to their request.

MR. P. STANHOPE (Wednesbury): I would suggest that there should be some restriction to the proposal of my hon. Friend the Member for East Donegal, who moved this Amendment; say, that mines employing less than 100 men should be exempt from this proposal. Might I suggest that the Amendment be put in this way—"that in any mine employing more than 100 men under ground, two competent male persons &c."

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: I should be glad to know whether the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary would be willing to accept the Amendment as suggested it should be amended. I am surprised the right hon. Gentleman got up and deprecated the Amendment as originally proposed by my hon. Friend the Member for East Donegal because there was a proposal for its modification by the hon. Gentleman the Member for North Somerset (Mr. Llewellyn), which my hon. Friend at once expressed his readiness to accede to, limiting its operation to large collieries. The arguments of the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary were directed against the Amendment as proposed. I submit they were entirely irrelevant I do not know whether the present moment would not be the time to propose the limitation proposed by my hon. Friend the Member for Wednesbury (Mr. P. Stanhope). If the form in which you put the Question, Mr. Courtney, be that the words "a competent male person" stand part of the clause, then I would suggest that my hon. Friend the Member for East Donegal should allow these words to pass without a Division, and that then he should propose his Amendment in the limited form which has just been suggested by my hon. Friend the Member for Wednesbury.

Mr. BURT (Morpeth): I hope the hon. Member will accept the Amendment to the Amendment, and it is desirable we should now go to a Division, for I think enough time has been devoted to this discussion; indeed, I think time altogether disproportionate to its relative importance.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I am of the same opinion——

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): I hope that the Committee will now agree——

The CHAIRMAN: Order, order! The hon. Member for East Donegal is in possession.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I agree with the hon. Member for Morpeth that a disproportionate amount of time has been devoted to the Amendment; but I must protest that it is not my fault. In order to shorten discussion I am perfectly prepared to adopt the Amendment of the hon. Member for Wednesbury.

The CHAIRMAN: In that case, it will be necessary to withdraw this Amendment.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I understood that the hon. Member would move an Amendment to mine.

The CHAIRMAN: No; it is impossible to do that. It is a former part of the clause.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Amendment proposed, in page 32, line 43, after the word "mine," to insert the words "employing not less than one hundred men."—(*Mr. Philip Stanhope.*)

Question put, "That those words be there inserted."

The Committee *divided:*—Ayes 63: Noes 133: Majority 70.—(Div. List, No. 388.) [1.35 A.M.]

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I beg now to move that you do report Progress. We have been now for something like eight and a-half hours at work on this Bill, and no one can say we have not done a considerable amount of work. We have got through eight pages of Amendments, and as many more remain to be discussed. It is obvious to the meanest comprehension that it is out of the question to attempt to finish the Committee stage to-night, and I do not think any good purpose will be served by keeping us here to a later hour. Some of us were at work until half-past 3 o'clock yesterday morning, and we have to be here again at noon to-day. I doubt, Mr. Courtney, if even your energy will be able to keep up with these constant demands upon it. I will venture to put it to the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House (Mr. W. H. Smith), whether it is possible, after we have been sitting close to our work to the extent I have mentioned, that we can be able to deliberate with any reasonable prospect of doing good work? We have to deal with a point that requires calm consideration, and I am sure we cannot, with our jaded energies, deal with it as it deserves.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. Conybeare.*)

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): If it is the wish of the mining Representatives, who naturally take the greatest interest in this Bill, that we should now break off the Committee I will consent to do so; but with them must rest the responsibility of taking that step. The hon. Gentleman says we have made considerable progress. Well, Sir, we did make considerable progress during one portion of the evening; but I have the words of the hon. Member for Morpeth (Mr. Burt) in my ears when he said a very disproportionate amount of time was spent on the last Amendment, and I cannot help remarking, from my own observation, that speech after speech was made with the object of delaying the progress of this Bill. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] I say this openly, and it is better to say it openly than to suggest it. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] I make no such charge against the Representatives of mining constituencies; they have done their very best to forward the Bill, and I hope they will continue to do so. But I must remind those who take an interest in the measure that time is a very serious element indeed in this matter, and that it will not be possible to pass the Bill unless these discussions are shortened, unless those who take what I may call an academic interest in this subject will put some restraint upon their desire to speak upon it. I consent to report Progress if hon. Members representing mining interests desire that we should do so.

MR. BURT (Morpeth): I do not think there has been anything in the nature of obstruction in regard to this Bill. There has been irrelevant talking, no doubt, as there always will be in connection with every subject. But I think there never has, within my own experience, been a Bill before the House discussed in a more direct and business-like way. Therefore, I think the remarks of the right hon. Gentlemen are to some extent uncalled for. I am exceedingly anxious myself that the Bill should pass this Session, and I fear that unless we dispose of this stage at the Sitting to-day (Wednesday) it is in very considerable danger. I feel, therefore, that it is very desirable we should get on a little further, and I would appeal to the hon. Gentleman to withdraw his Motion in order that we may do so. At the same time, I am quite prepared to accept my share of the responsibility. Although I am anxious that the Bill should pass, it would be a still greater evil than dropping the Bill to have it passed in an imperfect shape without due discussion. All things considered, I think the Government are pressing us too hard in this matter. However, I will ask the hon. Member to withdraw his Motion now, and allow us to make a little more progress, to insure the passage of the Bill through Committee at our next Sitting.

MR. BROADHURST (Nottingham, W.): I, also, representing a very large mining constituency, would like to join with my hon. Friend the Member for Morpeth in appealing to the hon. Member for the Camborne Division of Cornwall to withdraw his Motion to report Progress. But I exceedingly regret the tone and language that the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury has made use of. It must be remembered that every line of this Bill affects the safety of thousands and hundreds of thousands of people, and we who represent mining constituencies would be grossly neglecting our duty if we did not discuss it. I may also remind the right hon. Gentleman that one of his most devoted supporters sitting behind him has moved more Amendments to the Bill than any other two Members in the House.

MR. CONYBEARE: I have been appealed to to withdraw my Motion, and I may be allowed a word or two upon it. The right hon. Gentleman has been taunting us with not being mining Representatives, and taking only an academic interest in the subject; but I beg to assure the right hon. Gentleman that I know quite as much about the subject as himself or his Colleagues on that Bench. Moreover, I represent the Mining Division of Cornwall; no other division of the county goes by the name of the Mining Division; and at least I know as much of the wants, wishes, and necessities of miners as the right hon. Gentleman. In moving to report Progress, I did so directly in the interest of the miners of this country. At the request of my hon. Friends I withdraw my Motion, but on one condition. We are about to commence the discussion of an Amendment promoted by the hon. Member for West Nottingham (Mr. Broadhurst), which involves the question of the hours of labour, the eight hours' shift, and that, as probably the right hon. Gentleman knows, will involve a good deal of discussion. I am willing to withdraw my Motion if the Government will consent to report Progress at half-past 2. If that is not done, I will renew my Motion at that time. We are discussing a Bill of the utmost importance; it requires our close attention; but we must have a little rest, and there is but a short interval for that, seeing the hour at which we were released yesterday morning, and the time we meet again to-day.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): The next Amendment in my name is to line 44 of the Rule, to raise the age from 18 to 22.

MR. MATTHEWS: Agreed.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I am glad to find that something is agreed to.

Amendment proposed, in page 32, line 44, to leave out the word "eighteen," and insert the words "twenty-two."—(*Mr. Arthur O'Connor.*)

Question, "That those words be there substituted," put, and *agreed to.*

MR. BROADHURST (Nottingham, W.); I am extremely sorry to have to move this very important Amendment standing in my name at so late an hour, when it is impossible to make my case so clear and strong within the limited time at our disposal.

THE CHAIRMAN: It may facilitate discussion if I now say that the second Amendment of the hon. Member would be quite out of Order in this place. The first Amendment can be taken now, but the second cannot be moved here.

MR. BROADHURST: Then I will confine myself to the first point, which is that the man in charge of the engine shall be required to hold a certificate of competency from the Board of Trade. I would provide that the Board of Trade should appoint Examiners, and make rules for examination of persons wishing to act as engine-men. I also provide that where a man has been in charge of a steam engine for 12 months that shall free him from the necessity of undergoing examination at the hands of the Board. This is a matter well known to the House; previous Home Secretaries have had their attention called to it, and for 12 years I think it has been more or less under the notice of Parliament. Though I regret that I have had few opportunities of drawing attention to the subject since, I remember perfectly well the debate in which the then Home Secretary—now Lord Cross—said that engines and boilers had a language, and that if accidents arose it was because those in charge did not understand that language; hence the disasters that followed. With that assertion I am quite in accord, and upon it I am quite content to rest my case. Now, the proposal I make is taken from the Mines Act of 1883 for the Colony of Victoria. Our Colonies have provided this safeguard against accidents and loss of life; and this morning I was reading an official statement from an exceedingly high authority—that where the rule that men in charge of engines should hold a certificate was enforced the accidents were enormously fewer than in those mines where no such certificates were required. In 10 years, in collieries where the engines were in charge of uncertificated men, there were 35 accidents and a loss of 55 lives; while in collieries where the men held certificates, but where all other conditions were similar, there were, in the same time, but seven casualties and 19 lives lost. This goes to prove, beyond doubt, that certificates are necessary for the men in charge of steam engines, and that where the rule is enforced there is greater safety for life and property. I have no doubt we shall hear from my hon. Friends behind me instances of what we presume to be the incompetency of engine-men; and frequent disastrous accidents have occurred at mines owing to over-winding, and other accidents incident to the use of steam engines. I sincerely hope that the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary, now that he has accepted the Amendment raising the age of the persons in charge, will see his way to take a further step and accept my proposal. In asking him to do this, let me say that I do not propose that the examination shall be a severe one at all, nothing like the examinations required from men who take charge of sea going engines, or men who enter the Navy. Any man with an elementary knowledge of steam engines and boilers, and able to read and write, could pass the examination I would establish. I would remind him again that I do not propose to interfere with those who have held the position of engine-men for 12 months;

I would only enforce the examination upon those who entered the service within that time. I think my proposal is a reasonable one, and I am sure it will add to the confidence of the men in those to whom they have to entrust their lives, and will result in a great saving of property.

Amendment proposed, in page 32, line 45, after the word "age," to insert the words "and possessing a certificate of competency from the Board of Trade."—(*Mr. Broadhurst.*)

Question put, "That those words be there inserted."

The Committee *divided* :—Ayes 75; Noes 117: Majority 42.—(Div. List, No. 389.) [1.50 A.M.]

MR. PICKARD (York, W.R., Normanton): I beg to move, in page 33, general rule 29, at end, insert—

"That safety catches be attached to the cages to minimise the risk of shaft accidents, also detaching hooks to prevent over winding, with additional 'keps' on a high level to prevent descent of cage in case of hooks failing to act."

The object of this is to secure greater safety for our miners. I trust that the Home Secretary will accept the Amendment. I do not think it necessary to make any speech in recommending it, and I, therefore, will simply move it.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. STUART-WORTLEY) (Sheffield, Hallam): I do not think the Government can accept this Amendment. The Royal Commission fully considered these points, and so far as we gather their opinion it was that none of these devices or inventions were deserving of so much confidence as to justify legislating upon them. It would, therefore, be unsafe to accept this Amendment.

MR. BURT (Morpeth): With regard to the recommendations of the Royal Commission, I think you will find that they drew a distinction between safety cages and safety hooks. The detaching hooks have for a long time been in operation in a great number of mines, and have proved very effective. If the Government will not accept the Amendment—and it is much desired that they should —I hope we shall divide on it at once.

MR. PICKARD: I will withdraw that portion of the Amendment relating to safety catches.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member had better withdraw the Amendment altogether, and propose a fresh one.

MR. PICKARD: Very well, Sir; I ask leave to withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Amendment proposed,

In page 33, line 42, after the word "shaft," to insert the words "detaching hooks shall be attached to the cages to prevent over-winding, with additional 'keps' on a high level to prevent descent of cage in case of hooks failing to act."—(*Mr. Pickard.*)

Question put, "That those words be there inserted."

The Committee *divided* :—Ayes 69; Noes 115: Majority 46.—(Div. List, No. 390.) [2.10 A.M.]

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES (Durham, N.W.): On behalf of my hon. Friend the Member for the Bishop Auckland Division of Durham (Mr. Paulton), I beg to move the Amendment which stands in his name. I do not think it requires any discussion. I am sure that the Home Secretary will see the expediency of accepting it. It is a very small matter.

Amendment proposed, in page 34, to leave out line 10.—(*Mr. Atherley-Jones.*)

Question, "That those words be there left out," put, and *agreed to.*

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): Do we understand that the Government accept this Amendment?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): It is done.

MR. CONYBEARE: I did not hear it. Why do you not speak out? ["Order, order!"]

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): The Amendment standing in my name is a small one, it having reference to keeping daily records of the readings of the barometer and thermometer. If the Government intimate that they are willing to accept it, I will say nothing whatever in defence of it; but if the mind of the Government, or what is called the mind of the Government, is undecided, I will say a few words in support of it. I think it is self-evident that it would be a most useful thing that a record should be taken of the fluctuations of the mine. I may just say, Mr. Courtney, in order to save myself from the wrath of the First Lord of the Treasury—whose form I see disappearing from my gaze—that I propose this Amendment because it has been suggested to me by several Gentlemen intimately acquainted with mining affairs, and, in fact, it is their Amendment, although it stands in my name. They are most anxious that it should be accepted. Now, what I wish to bring before the Home Secretary is that these records, if kept, will be very useful as showing the character of the mine. I am told that the character of a mine can be plainly seen from the barometrical changes. At any rate, that is what experts tell me. For example, a mine which is accustomed to great fluctuations is nearly always a dangerous mine. Accordingly, if the readings were to show these constant fluctuations, it would be a warning to the miners, and they would be more on their guard. In fact, I think the importance of the Amendment is self-evident; and I, therefore, do not think it necessary to waste any amount of time in proposing it. I hope the Home Secretary will at once accept it.

Amendment proposed,

In page 34, general rule 32, line 12, after "mine," insert "and daily records shall be kept of the readings thereof in the locality immediately adjacent."—(*Mr. T. P. O'Connor.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): We are all very much obliged to the hon. Member for the Scotland Division of Liverpool for condescending at this late period to join in the discussion, and, with that fine humour and delicate satire which always distinguishes him, to refer to what he calls the mind of the Government. I am sorry to say that what little mind the Government has does not reach the height or the depth of this matter. Sir, the hon. Gentleman in his Amendment says that daily records shall be kept of the readings thereof—that is, of the readings of the barometer and thermometer—kept above ground in the locality immediately adjacent. I confess I do not understand that. Is it the reading in the locality; is it the fluctuation of the locality; is it the records in the locality which is the locality immediately adjacent; is it the barometer adjacent to the mine, or adjacent to the reading? I am sure I do not know. Both the grammar and the meaning of this Amendment are so totally unintelligible to me that I feel compelled to reject it.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: I think I was justified in expressing a doubt whether the right hon. and dignified Gentleman was in possession of a mind, because I must say that anybody who has a mind—in which I am not bound to include the right hon. Gentleman—would clearly see the meaning of this proposal. I may say to the right hon. Gentleman, who has chosen thus to personally attack me, that the phraseology is phraseology which has been put in by experts, and by persons who know something of what they are talking about. I am quite prepared to find that the right hon. Gentleman does not understand the meaning of the phraseology; in fact, Mr. Courtney, I should be surprised to find that he ever read a line of the Bill at all; for I observe that whenever a proposal is made he does not get up and say aye or no to it, for the very good reason that if he were to say a word he would at once expose his ignorance of the measure. The right hon. Gentleman need not look to the Chair for protection. I tell him my language is perfectly in Order, and I am speaking of a notorious fact; for whenever we have asked the right hon. Gentleman to express an opinion on any Amendment he has sat glued to his seat, because he did not know what was going on, and did not want to expose the depth of his ignorance. The right hon. Gentleman thought proper to make a personal attack on me. I can only say that I have put one Amendment only on the Paper, because I did not feel justified in taking a large share in a discussion on a Bill which requires the knowledge of experts, and yet I am blamed by the right hon. Gentleman because I confine my observations to one Amendment. That is very extraordinary after the remarks and charges made by the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury. I will now deal with the grammatical or ungrammatical characteristics of the Amendment. It provides "that daily records shall be kept of the readings thereof in the locality immediately adjacent." Now, you must read the matter as a whole, and therefore it is that daily records shall be kept in the locality immediately adjacent to the mine. I think that is clear to all minds except the elegant mind of the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary, so, to suit him, I am willing to make the Amendment read thus—"That daily records shall be kept in the locality immediately adjacent to the mine of the reading of the barometer and thermometer."

MR. BARNES (Derbyshire, Chesterfield): The hon. Member for the Scotland Division of Liverpool speaks of the barometer as giving an indication of the special condition of each mine. What it really indicates is the condition of the atmosphere—it does not show the state of the mine, nor does the thermometer.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: The hon. Gentleman misapprehends my meaning. If you had a record for a considerable period of the readings of the barometer and thermometer it would enable you to gain some idea of the character of a particular mine.

MR. BURT (Morpeth): I feel sorry I cannot keep up the liveliness of the debate. I can only say we are not particular as to the phraseology of the Amendment; only give us the substance of it.

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): I do not see the object of having the readings of the barometer and thermometer posted daily.

MR. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck): The object is simply this. There are a number of miners who do take a deep interest in the state and condition of the mine, and they wish to know what the readings of the barometer and thermometer are day by day, so that they may ascertain it for themselves. If the Government had understood the Bill they were dealing with they would have realized that that was our object; and if the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary would, when asked a question, give an answer instead of forcing a Division, and would, moreover, give reasons for his refusal, I think it would be very much better for all of us.

MR. MATTHEWS: I really do not think I ought to be subjected to such a reproach by the hon. Member. I have, time after time, answered questions put by him. If he intends the reproach to apply to the Government in a general way, then I would point out that he himself has not answered the statement of the hon. and learned Member (Mr. Tomlinson), that though a knowledge of the barometrical condition of a district might be of importance, yet the separate barometrical condition of a particular mine could not possibly be of such importance as to require a daily record to be kept. There is not such a difference between one record and another as to make it of the slightest moment. It is the general barometrical condition of a district that is important. I want to point out that omission to do a thing ordered by this Act makes a man liable to a penalty, makes him guilty of a criminal offence and liable to be dragged before a magistrate; and to say he shall keep a daily record of the readings of the barometer and thermometer to be at the service of every man really seems to be pushing the case too far. Any workman who takes an interest in the subject can himself keep a record of the readings of the barometer and thermometer in the various mines; and, therefore, I hold that this Amendment is not necessary.

SIR JOSEPH PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): We have already legislated that whether there is gas or no gas there shall be a thermometer and a barometer at every mine. I believe there would be very little trouble in taking daily readings of these, and advantage might arise now and then from having these readings recorded. If the hon. Member will provide that a record shall be kept at the principal office of the mine it would simplify matters, and perhaps prove useful.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I am astonished that hon. Members do not perceive the real object of the Amendment. The clause provides that a barometer and a thermometer shall be placed in a conspicuous place, near the entrance to the mine; but if you have a barometer and thermometer which are never consulted, which are as if they were not, so far as inspection by those in charge of the mine is concerned, of course this clause is of no use. Now, the object of this Amendment is to secure that it shall be the duty of the manager to see not only that the thermometer and barometer are placed above ground at the mouth of the pit, but that, being there, they shall be scrutinized every day. I know that barometrical pressure is a matter of importance, and I know, also, that too much significance can be attached to it. But it is allowed that if there is a decrease suddenly, then the issue of gas will be far greater than when the pressure is much higher and the gas kept inside the coal. That being so, we want to secure that the observations necessary to be made are made, and the only way to secure that is to keep a record.

Mr. A. J. WILLIAMS (Glamorgan, S.): I do think it would be just as well to keep a record at every mine. The right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary is aware—and I hope this will not be considered merely academic—that, at the conclusion of their inquiry, the Commissioners expressed some doubt whether the barometrical pressure had anything to do with exhalations of gas; but then their attention was drawn to some remarkable experiments carried on in Prussia, which they say may lead to very important conclusions as to the escape of gas from decrease of atmospheric pressure. They allude to these experiments, and point out the great value of keeping a daily record of barometrical pressure. As to the thermometer, I am not quite sure of its value.

Mr. ATHERLEY-JONES (Durham, N.W.): Just one word. I think the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary might accept the Amendment. It is a simple matter, and I do not think any mineowner will object to it. It can easily be done, and it is of some value. It will be valuable in this sense, that miners will have an opportunity of comparing notes on the variations of the barometrical pressure, and the influence that atmospheric change may have had on past dangers, applying that experience to apprehended danger. I think the hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary might, if only to save time, accept the Amendment.

Mr. W. ABRAHAM (Glamorgan, Rhondda): The right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary himself has already admitted that the barometrical readings of the district would be very valuable. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] Yes; he has admitted that. But then I ask the right hon. Gentleman to consider that the majority of the miners would have no chance whatever of seeing such readings of the district if they were not recorded at their own mine. Probably the next colliery would be four or five miles away. I trust the right hon. Gentleman will concede this Amendment. I feel inclined to commend the Government for the consideration shown to us; but, since their rejection of the Amendment of the hon. Member for Normanton (Mr. Pickard), I am sorry to say they have shown very little inclination to adopt any suggestion of ours with the object of increasing the safety of miners.

Mr. WOOD (Durham, Houghton-le-Spring): I cannot see any objection whatever to the proposal. Indeed, so far as I know, the readings of the barometer are closely watched and recorded at every well-managed colliery.

Mr. HANDEL COSSHAM (Bristol, E.): I can see no objection to the Amendment, and its adoption may prove very useful.

Mr. STAVELEY HILL (Staffordshire, Kingswinford): I hope the right hon. Gentleman will accept, if not this particular Amendment, one to the same effect; for I am quite sure it will be very useful for reference with other indications in respect to the liberation of gas if readings of the barometer are noted at particular hours, and the record kept at the pay office or head office of the mine.

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): To enable the right hon. Gentleman to find an interval for the consideration of this point, which has been so pressed upon his attention, I beg to move that we now report Progress.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. Conybeare.*)

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR: I would certainly strongly advise my hon. Friend to withdraw that Motion if the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary will signify his willingness to accept an Amendment in the sense of that moved. I do not ask him to accept these particular words.

Mr. MATTHEWS: My only reason for objecting to the general adoption of the rule is to save the little owners from the trouble and expense. By the large proprietors it is done, or could be done without difficulty. But I am thinking of the little collieries employing some eight or 10 men, where the duty of keeping a record of these readings might, with a limited staff, be attended with endless bother and trouble. But, rather than spend more time upon it, I will accept the Amendment, asking the Committee not to make it too stringent, to entail too great a burden generally.

MR. HINGLEY (Worcestershire, N.): May I suggest that the register should be kept at certain places in the colliery district?

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: I suppose it will be best to introduce the Amendment on Report. In agreeing to withdraw the Amendment, I would just observe that this is the second time we have forced the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary to eat his words.

MR. CONYBEARE: I fail to see any argument against my Motion. We have reached a time when we might fairly knock off work on this Bill.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: I will ask the hon. Member to withdraw his Motion for the present, and I will then withdraw the Amendment.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. CONYBEARE: I now make the Motion to report Progress.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. Conybeare.*)

MR. MATTHEWS: In assenting to the Motion, I hope I may make an appeal to hon. Members to really finish the Bill at our Sitting to-day. I am quite sure this can be done if we set to work with an earnest endeavour to make progress.

MR. FENWICK: I can assure the right hon. Gentleman we are just as anxious to make progress as he is; but we are not disposed to rush the Bill without consideration; we would rather not have it at all. I think we have reason to complain that the Government have treated us unfairly in leaving this Bill, which affects 500,000 lives, to be disposed of in a few Sittings at the very end of the Session. We are anxious to make progress; but I say again we are not prepared to rush this Bill through the House.

MR. A. J. WILLIAMS: I quite agree with that. As to the remarks that have fallen from the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith), I would just say that we waited on while other Business was proceeded with from day to day, and from week to week, waiting for this measure with the greatest patience; and in the discussion we have exercised the greatest forbearance, and shown a desire to treat the Bill in a broad and liberal spirit. I trust this will be recognized, and that the remarks of the right hon. Gentleman will not be repeated.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Committee report Progress; to sit again *To-morrow.*

POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANKS AND GOVERNMENT ANNUITIES BILL.

(*Mr. Raikes, Mr. Jackson.*)

[BILL 344.] COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): I hope the House will allow this Bill to be taken, although the hour is late. There are a number of hon. Members present who take an interest in the subject, and it would be more convenient to them to consider it now than on another occasion, especially as there is little hope of being able to take it at an earlier hour. In the first instance, I have to move the Instruction to the Committee to make it possible for the Committee to take into consideration the proposal with a view to extending the operation of the Bill to all Savings Banks administered by Trustees.

Motion made, and Question,

"That it be an Instruction to the Committee that they have power to extend the provisions of the Bill to all Savings Banks administered by Trustees,"—(*Mr. Raikes,*)

—put, and *agreed to.*

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

PART I.

Post Office Savings Banks.

Clause 1 (Limit of annual amount of deposit).

MR. RAIKES: I now propose, in accordance with the engagement I have given, to strike out this clause, by which it was proposed to raise the amount which any person could deposit during one year in a Post Office Savings Bank from £30 to £50. For reasons which I explained on the second reading the Government have determined not to proceed with this clause. I say it with some regret, for I think it would be a valuable provision in our Savings Bank Law that a clause like this should find a place. But difficulties have arisen with regard to the position of Trustee Savings Banks, some hon. Members being desirous of extending the operation of the clause to Trustee Savings Banks, and others offering opposition to that course. Under the circumstances, it appears to us better to strike out the clause now, leaving the point for further discussion in connection with a larger scheme. It would jeopardize the progress of the Bill for the Government to insist on passing the clause in its present form limited to Post Office Savings Banks. I believe the House is anxious, without exception, to make the Bill law, and will allow us to abandon the clause; though I hope, in a future Session, it will again come up for consideration under more favourable circumstances.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Clause 1 stand part of the Bill."—(*Mr. Raikes.*)

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): I hope the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman will not be agreed to. It seems to me that the clause should be retained in the Bill, and I cannot see any reason against it. I hope the Government will allow us to consider the question on its merits. It is said the clause would only affect 1 per cent of the depositors in the Savings Banks, and I believe this is true; but it means some 40,000 persons, and these 40,000 of the best of the artizan class who are striving by industry and thrift to raise themselves in the social scale. No class is more worthy the consideration of Parliament, and the only thing this clause does is to enable that class to increase their yearly deposits from £30 to £50. It is used as an objection that many persons pay in £30 in one day; and, therefore, these are rich persons for whom the Banks were not supposed to provide. But this only shows that those who make this objection do not know the habits of the people. They put in the £30 in one lump sum, because, having already paid to the Post Office Savings Bank their yearly maximum, they have laid up the money at home until the year is past, and then they deposit it in a lump sum. It is desirable that we should enable them to put the money in as the year goes on. I do not desire to make an elaborate speech at this hour. The only objection comes from the bankers and the old Trustee Savings Banks; but, considering that the Government have had five or six months to consider the Bill and went carefully into this part of it, I do not think it is reasonable to give way simply because the bankers wish it or because the Trustee Banks cannot have it as well. Banks are probably well able to take care of themselves, even if the clause did injure them in the slightest way, and I do not think we should place a check on the habit of thrift among the people for fear the business of a certain class may possibly be interfered with. But it is an utter mistake to suppose that the clause would damage the banks; it is an utter mistake to suppose that anything that will promote thrift among the people will be detrimental to the banking interest. It would be immeasurably to the advantage of ordinary banks that it should be competent for a man to accumulate £150 in three years instead of five—he will then be more eligible and more ready to open an account in an ordinary bank. I have had much to do with a savings bank for the people, and an institution that numbers 60,000 depositors, and our transactions are more numerous than many other banks combined, and I know that a great number of our depositors beginning to save their pence have learned the habit of saving, and in a few years have transferred their accounts to ordinary Joint Stock Banks. I do not hesitate to say that the great prosperity of the banking interest in the last 15 or 20 years may be largely attributed to the progress of Post Office Savings Banks, and the habits of banking which they have inculcated among the masses of the people. When these were started it was said that banks would be ruined, and that people would not use ordinary banks as they had been accustomed to do; but, as a matter of fact, though the Post Office holds some £50,000,000 of savings, Joint Stock Banks are doing a greater business, and have been more prosperous since the savings banks were established. I do not wish to enter at length into this subject. I will only appeal to the Government to allow Members on this side, who, perhaps, are not quite so independent in their position as some who sit below the Gangway, to vote on this question as they think proper. It is a matter, I think, upon which independent judgment should be used. It is not a Party question; it is entirely a working man's question; and inasmuch as the Government brought in the clause a week or two ago I do not think they should use their influence to prevent hon. Members who have pledged themselves to their constituents from voting as they think the merit of the question demands. I am sure if hon. Members vote without restraint the clause will be retained in the Bill.

Mr. BROADHURST (Nottingham, W.): Just a few words to say how deeply I regret the action of the Government in withdrawing this clause. A recommendation which only a few years back we carried through Committee was to give depositors the right of depositing £100 in the year, and the proposal in this Bill is to allow the very moderate sum of £50. But the Government runs down its flag without engaging the enemy on the first indication of attack from the handful of bankers in the House. It is the most lamentable exhibition of weakness I have seen in my Parliamentary experience. At least they might have gone to a Division in defence of their principle. As the hon. Gentleman the Member for North Islington (Mr. Bartley) very fairly said, this is absolutely a working man's question. Post Office Savings Banks have done more to encourage habits of thrift than any other institution set up in the nation; and why the Government should seek to limit the good they are doing—why they should go back upon the advance they proposed to make—is what I cannot understand at all. I am sure they must themselves be conscious that they are betraying the interest of the thrifty artizan class in the country when they refuse to give Government security for the care of hard-earned savings. The present limit is most detrimental to the cause of thrift. It is a frequent thing for the working classes to lend one to the other sums of money to meet times of difficulty or cases of emergency that may arise; and, this money drawn out from their savings being returned again, they are precluded from depositing it again in the only bank at their disposal within the year, so the money remains at home, and there is the temptation to dispose of in less desirable ways. The hon. Gentleman estimated that 1 per cent of depositors are inconvenienced by the present limit; but I say no man can tell what percentage is affected. I should say that 10 per cent would be much nearer than 1 per cent to the number of people who feel the inconvenience of the £30 limit. With regard to the action of the banks, I cannot imagine a more short-sighted policy. It is perfectly well known that every man who has made a fortune in this country laid the foundation of it by small savings, and the Post Office Banks have been enormous feeders of the great banking concerns of the country. I think, therefore, the banks are adopting a blundering policy opposed to their real interests. It is most regretable that the rich bankers of London and other parts of the country should be allowed to step in and say that the working classes shall not be encouraged to save more than £30 a-year in banks where their security can absolutely be relied on. The most important point in regard to the workman's savings is that he shall be enabled to invest them safely and by a ready means. Now, a Post Office Savings Bank is always at hand; it is perfectly safe; and surely we should give every possible encouragement to the working classes to take advantage of this great national institution.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen) (St. George's, Hanover Square): I only wish to say one or two words in answer to the hon. Gentleman the Member for West Nottingham (Mr. Broadhurst), because I think he did not understand what I said before. I have already explained that the difficulty did not arise with the bankers, and the opposition of the bankers is not the consideration which led us to modify this clause. It was rather the movement made by the Trustee Savings Banks, which, though not standing in the same position as the Post Office Savings Bank, are entitled to some consideration. The Post Office Savings Bank was referred to by the hon. Member as if it afforded the only mode in which working men could invest their savings. It is the safest, I admit. But I do not think the Government could entirely disregard the representations which came from a body in many ways so representative of the working classes as the Trustee Savings Banks, and the objections brought forward by that body were of considerable force. It was pointed out that hitherto they had been treated on the same footing as the Post Office Savings Bank. The difficulty we felt was that of including them in the operation of the £50 limit, and that was what led to the modification of the Government proposal. I hope that the House will discard the idea that it was in any way the opposition of the bankers which influenced us. It was not that at all. The second point to bear in mind is this—that if a man wishes to invest his savings on Government security through the Post Office Bank he is not confined within the £30 limit; but if he will do that which I believe the House desires him to do—namely, invest it in Consols, for which increased facilities are given by this Bill —he can not only put £30 in the Savings Bank, but he can invest a large amount beyond that in Consols, which are as safe as the Post Office Savings Bank, and this will increase largely the number of fundholders, which must prove a great advantage to this country. That being so, the restriction of the limit will not do the harm which my hon. Friend fears, and I am sure that his regret that a man cannot invest more than £30 a-year in Post Office Bank will be much modified if the working classes are induced, as this Bill seeks to induce them, to invest very considerably in Government Funds.

Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): I have no intention to occupy the attention of the House at any length, the more so as the reasons given by the Government are such that I cannot see any force in them. It is true that the Post Office and the Trustee Savings Banks have been treated in the same manner; but I must remind the House that there is already a grave inequality between them, as the Post Office Bank pays 2½ per cent, and the Trustee Savings Bank 2¾ per cent, per annum to depositors. And if there are reasons for not extending the benefits of the clause to the Trustee Banks, I really do not see why the limit should not be made £50 in the case of the Post Office Savings Bank. Every Postmaster General for the last 10 years has been strongly in favour of making this amendment, and I believe that my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) introduced a Bill in 1880 with this object. Another Bill with a like object was introduced by the late Mr. Fawcett in 1884, and I can positively state this—that successive Postmaster Generals have desired, in the interests of thrift among the working classes, to extend the limit in the manner originally proposed in this clause. I am unable to see the force of the argument with regard to investment in Funds. No doubt, the Bill will give greater facilities; but they will only apply to cases in which the money is already in the Savings Bank. As I understand it, it will not be open to working men gradually to invest in the Post Office Savings Bank until £30 is reached in one year, and to invest any sum beyond £30 in the Funds. He may, it is true, bring £30 or £50 to the Post Office and invest it there in Consols; but that is not what the working man wants. He wants to be allowed to gradually accumulate £50 in the Post Office Savings Bank, and then to invest it.

Mr. GOSCHEN: He may invest £5 at a time.

Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE: Quite so; but still the limit will not let him put more than £30 in the Post Office Savings Bank in one year.

Mr. GOSCHEN: Certainly; but he can invest his savings beyond that in the Funds.

Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE: No. I take it he may take £50 from the Post Office Savings Bank and invest it in the Funds; but he cannot accumulate it pound by pound, week by week, and get it invested. We want to increase the limit of gradual investment from £30 to £50, and I am unable to see what interest the banks have in objecting to that. I believe the working classes greatly desire it; and I also believe that nobody would be better pleased than the right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General himself, if the House took the matter into its own hands and carried the clause as it stands.

Sir JOHN LUBBOCK (London University): I hope that if the right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General brings this matter forward on some future occasion he will, at least, do so at a more convenient hour, and at one at which it can be thoroughly discussed. I quite agree with my hon. Friend the

Member for West Nottingham (Mr. Broadhurst) that the bankers really have no interest in this matter. I speak for myself, and, I believe, for other bankers, when I say this.

Mr. BROADHURST: I rise to a point of Order. I only wish to say this, that I have myself had telegrams from bankers in many places opposing it.

Sir JOHN LUBBOCK: The reason why we oppose it is entirely misunderstood. The hon. Member referred to large London bankers, and I can say for myself that, as far as I am concerned, the clause will not make the slightest difference to me as a banker. I am quite disposed to agree with my hon. Friend that the encouragement of thrift among the working classes is a benefit to bankers. But the difficulties I feel are of a totally different character. Let me remind the House of an article written by that great authority—Mr. Stanley Jevons—in which he pointed out a considerable danger to the public in receiving larger sums and then investing them in Government securities. That involves a great risk to the Government —a risk which, so long as the practice is confined to small sums, is infinitesimal. But it does exist, even though we have at least £3,500,000 from the Savings Bank. The general opinion of those who have looked into the matter is that if you increase the amount deposited in the savings bank and invested it in Government securities it would lead to loss, for money would be deposited when Consols are high, and would, perhaps, have to be sold when they are low. That is one objection we entertain. There is another, and a very serious one. The Trustee Savings Bank and the Post Office Savings Bank only do one part of the banker's business. Banking business consists of different parts. One is to collect funds paid into the bank, and the other—an equally important duty— is to lend money out to customers on favourable terms. But the result of these banks is to drain enormous sums from different localities in the counties, and to bring them up to London to be invested in Government securities. Already the amount is very nearly £100,000,000. This may be all very well in fair weather times; but if we have a great war you may find very serious difficulties arise; and if this proposal is carried out, that danger will be considerably increased. I maintain that savings banks have not been an unmixed benefit to this country. One effect has been to discourage the creation of workmen's banks and local banks, which would otherwise have been established. In Germany no fewer than 900 workmen's banks have been established, and hold large sums of money. They have proved a great convenience and extremely useful to the community. Some years ago it was in contemplation to establish banks of this kind in this country; but it was found to be practically impossible, on account of the fact that the Government did so very much of the banking business. I have now pointed out several reasons which affect the whole community and not merely the banks. But there are dangers to which the banks, from the very nature of their business, are, perhaps, more alive than other people. The Post Office, perhaps not unnaturally, is anxious to extend its business in all directions. I have pointed out how to banking already certain injury has been done; but there are other directions also. For instance, the effect of the Government taking the telegraphs has been very much to discourage telephones. We believe it to be an undesirable thing for the Government to undertake business for the sake of profit. I think the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has shown that the idea that this will in any way encourage thrift is quite a mistake, because, as he has already pointed out, there is nothing whatever to prevent the working classes investing their money in Consols if they choose to do so. Moreover, so far as the question of encouraging thrift goes I do not see that increasing the limit would make any difference at all. This is an attempt on the part of a great Government to engage in banking business on a large scale. If £50 had been suggested in the first place instead of £30, I may say for myself that a difference of £20 I should not have thought very material; but what is now felt is that this is merely the thin end of the wedge, and if we agree to go now from £30 to £50, we do so in face of the threat already made—if I may call it so—at any rate, in face of an intention on the part of the Post Office to try and extend the limit to £100 another year. I do not wish to detain the Committee at this late hour; but we think there is great danger of the Government undertaking business merely for the sake of profit. Without going at greater length into these objections, I trust that my hon. Friend will see that we, as bankers, do not object to the proposal on the grounds he supposes, but that there are solid objections to the scheme. I trust, therefore, that the Committee will support the Government in the attitude it has taken up.

Question put.

The Committee *divided:*—Ayes 32; Noes 89: Majority 57.—(Div. List, No. 391.) [3.20 A.M.]

Clause 2 (Computation of amount deposited by depositor).

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): I propose that this clause be omitted. It refers to withdrawals, and raises very much the same principle as Clause 1, and I hope the Committee will deal with it without further delay.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Clause 2 be omitted from the Bill."—(*Mr. Raikes.*)

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): In connection with this matter, I hope provision will be made in some part of the Bill that withdrawals made in order to purchase Consols will not be considered as deposits during the year within the meaning of the Bill—that is, that such deposits for investment in Consols shall not go towards the maximum allowed to be deposited in the year.

MR. RAIKES: I will see if I can put in any words later on to carry that out. I cannot frame them just now.

SIR ROBERT FOWLER (London): I only rise to say that though I differ from my hon. Friend the Member for North Islington (Mr. Bartley) on this Bill, I hope the right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General will consider the point he has just raised.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Clause 3 (Extension of power of Postmaster General to make regulations for the Post Office Savings Banks).

On the Motion of Mr. RAIKES, the following Amendments made:—In page 3, line 2, at end, add:—

"Provided that such regulations shall prohibit a person from being a depositor in both a trustee and a post office savings bank, or from having two separate accounts in the post office savings bank, and shall require such declaration from a depositor as may be necessary for preventing his having such two accounts, and shall provide for the forfeiture, under the conditions specified in the regulations, of money due to the depositor in the event of such declaration being false;"

line 2, after sub-section (1), insert—

"The Treasury shall, from time to time, make, revoke, alter, or add to regulations for the purpose of extending to trustee savings banks any regulations made in pursuance of this Act with respect to post office savings banks so far as those regulations provide:—

"(a.) For the payment or transfer of sums which belong to persons appearing to be minors or of unsound mind, or form part of the personal estate of any person appearing to be deceased; or

"(b.) For the transfer of deposits from one account to another account, whether an existing or a new account; or

"(c.) For determining the evidence to be accepted of any matter for the purpose of the payment or transfer of any sum; or

"(d.) For determining the receipts which are to be a good discharge in the case of the payment or transfer of any sum;"

line 3, leave out "said regulations," and insert "regulations made in pursuance of this Act;" line 21, leave out "post office;" line 23, leave out "said regulations," and insert "regulations under this Act;" line 35, leave out "Postmaster General and;" line 38, leave out sub-section (4).

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 4 (Amendment of 43 & 44 Vict. c. 36, as to minimum sum of Stock to be invested).

On the Motion of Mr. RAIKES, the following Amendments made:—In page 3, line 41, leave out "by the Postmaster General;" page 4, line 1, leave out from "made," to "in," in line 2; line 3, leave out from "substituted," to "for," in line 4.

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clauses 5 to 8, inclusive, *agreed to.*

Clause 9 (Repeal).

On the Motion of Mr. RAIKES the following Amendments made:—In page 5, leave out sub-section (1); line 20, after "regulations," insert "with respect to Post Office Savings Banks;" line 21, at end, add—

"The Acts mentioned in the Third Schedule to this Act shall, to the extent in the third column of that Schedule mentioned, be repealed as from the date at which any regulations with respect to Trustee Savings Banks made in pursuance of Part I. of this Act come into operation."

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

On the Motion of Mr. Raikes, the following New Clause *agreed to,* and *added* to the Bill after Clause 3 :—

(Laying of regulations before Parliament.)

"The draft of all regulations proposed to be made in pursuance of this Act shall be laid before both Houses of Parliament for not less than forty days before they are made, and all such regulations when made shall come into operation at the time therein mentioned, and shall be binding on all persons as if they were enacted in this Act."

Mr. WHITLEY (Liverpool, Everton): I should like to move the insertion, after the words "all such regulations," of the words "whether Post Office or Trustee Savings Banks."

Amendment proposed, in line 3, after the words "all such regulations," to insert the words "whether Post Office or Trustee Savings."—(*Mr. Whitley.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. RAIKES: I think, Sir, the words are hardly necessary. I think the clause as drafted will cover everything; but if my hon. Friend likes I will consider the point before Report. I shall be glad if he will withdraw the Amendment now.

Mr. WHITLEY: With the assurance that the point will be considered I am perfectly content.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Bill *reported,* with an amended Title; as amended, to be considered upon *Thursday.*

ESCHEAT (PROCEDURE) BILL [*Lords*].

(*Mr. Attorney General.*)

[BILL 373.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Attorney General.*)

Mr. HALDANE (Haddington): I will not occupy more than a minute. I would only remark that you are making an extraordinary change without much attention being paid to it. This Bill repeals a good deal of old learning in regard to escheats perfectly properly; but with it there is this extraordinary change—that this House is asked to delegate its functions to the Lord Chancellor and leave him to make rules——

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir Richard Webster) (Isle of Wight): Allow me to explain that if the hon. Member had only taken the trouble to communicate with me, I would have told him that I propose to insert in the Bill a simple Code re-enacting all that is necessary.

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): The House has to proceed with Business again at 12 to-day, and it is now too late to go on with this or any other Business. We have shown good faith to our engagements; but I must now move that the debate be adjourned.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Mr. Sexton.*)

Sir RICHARD WEBSTER: I would appeal to the hon. Member to allow the second reading of this Bill to be taken. There need be no debate upon it; it is merely a technical matter, as the Bill proposes to remove some old Statutes cumbering the Statute Book and simplify the procedure.

Mr. EDWARD HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.): I know nothing of the Bill itself; but the title is curious and unpleasantly suggestive. But I think we ought, now that it is getting towards 4 o'clock, to have done with Business. I do not want to occupy time beyond this simple protest. The Attorney General looks annoyed; but I think we have more reason to feel annoyance.

Mr. HALDANE: If I may be allowed to make one observation. What the Attorney General has told us, and what, of course, it was not possible for us to divine, that a short Code will be introduced, removes my objection, and I think that of everybody else. I hope the hon. Member will withdraw his Motion.

Mr. SEXTON: My objection is on entirely different grounds to that of the hon. Member; it is on account of the time, and I shall move an adjournment on this and every other Order.

Question put.

The House *divided:*—Ayes 21; Noes 70: Majority 49.—(Div. List, No. 392.)

[3.35 A.M.]

Original Question again proposed.

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I beg to move that this House do now adjourn. The conduct of Business in this fashion is a public scandal. We have been here now for 12 hours, and a good many of us were here until this hour yesterday morning. We have to be in our places to consider a difficult and technical measure at 12 o'clock to-day, and it is impossible to discharge our duties unless we get some amount of rest. There are also the officials of the House to consider, and loud complaints are made of the strain, bodily and mental, to which they are subjected. Here we have a long list of Orders on the Paper many of which we never heard of before, and which are now thrown at our heads by the other House. We know in former times, when Bills have been sent up from this House to the other House rather late in the Session, they have been bundled out-of-doors without ceremony, and I think we have a right to take our stand upon public convenience. We have a number of Bills which are put before us as Consolidation Bills—for instance, the Sheriffs Consolidation Bill — which, nevertheless, do propose considerable changes in the law. I am not going to refer to the Bill, mentioning it only as an illustration. It is a public scandal, I say, to conduct Business in this way; and I will do what I can to stop it. There are less than 100 Members present, and it is absurd for a sixth of the House to attempt to legislate in this manner; and the only way to check it is to take a firm and decided stand against it, and if I have to stay here until this time tomorrow I will do it.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn."—(*Mr. Conybeare.*)

Sir RICHARD WEBSTER: If there is any chance of the country reading the hon. Member's speech, I should be content to leave the country to form its own opinion of the hon. Member's motives.

Mr. CONYBEARE: I am ready to report it out-of-doors.

Sir RICHARD WEBSTER: Of course, I am not going to put Members to the trouble of going through repeated Divisions. Only this I will say—that there is no reason whatever why this Bill should not pass through the House. Still, if the hon. Member will allow his Motion to be negatived, I will not put the House to further trouble by attempting to force the measure.

Mr. SEXTON: After the explanation of the hon. and learned Gentleman I would suggest to my hon. Friend (Mr. Conybeare) that he should withdraw his Motion, and that we should allow this stage of the Bill to be taken, on the understanding that no other Business is proceeded with.

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Jackson) (Leeds, N.): I hope the hon. Member would not include those mere questions of Report of formal Resolutions. There were certain Resolutions passed in Committee last night which have to be agreed to by the House; but the whole will not occupy five minutes. I hope the hon. Member will agree to take these.

Mr. CONYBEARE: If the Business will only occupy five minutes, what is the objection to take it after a quarter to 6 to-morrow?

Mr. JACKSON: If the hon. Member will promise that they will not then be objected to; but I am afraid he is not in a position to do that.

Mr. CONYBEARE: I will not oppose them.

Mr. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.): The Government owe an apology to hon. Members for this scandalous way of proceeding with Business. There is an important Bill in charge of the Postmaster General which was torn to pieces in its progress through Committee just now without the slightest explanation, and I do not believe there are three Members here who have the slightest idea of the changes made. That is all very well, of course, from the Government view of conducting the Business of the country; but I think the country itself holds a very different opinion. It is only right the people should have some slight idea of what is going on. For my own part, I will undertake that I will not oppose the taking of the Resolutions referred to at the close of the Morning Sitting at a quarter to 6. But no stage of other Business ought now to be taken.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Original Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Monday* next.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARIES [SALARIES, &c.].—REPORT.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House doth agree with the Resolution of the Committee."—(*Mr. Jackson.*)

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): If the hon. Gentleman makes a rule he should apply it equally all round. He has passed over a very important Resolution, in which I am interested. I beg to move that the Report be deferred till to-morrow.

Mr. JACKSON: The hon. Member is aware that the one was a Resolution with Notice of opposition. This is the Report stage.

Mr. SEXTON: It was a Money Bill.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Report *deferred* till *To-morrow.*

COPYRIGHT (MUSICAL COMPOSITIONS) (No. 2.) BILL.—[Bill 322.]

(*Mr. Bartley, Mr. Addison, Mr. Dillwyn, Mr. Lawson.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): I hope the House will now read this Bill a second time. It does not interfere with the Law of Copyright—it simply is intended to facilitate small concerts given to the poor, without subjecting singers to a fixed heavy penalty for the singing of copyright songs. It provides that when a copyright song is sung a reasonable award of compensation shall be given in each case, to be awarded by the Judge and jury, and not an arbitrary and fixed sum which the law now authorizes to be claimed and compels a Court to award.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Bartley.*)

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned." —(*Mr. Cobb.*)

Mr. EDWARD HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.): I think the hon. Member (Mr. Bartley) will agree to that Motion. ["No!"] Well, if he desires it, we must go to a Division; but he has nothing to gain by forcing us to go through the Lobby. I think he had better follow the example set him by the Government.

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): We allowed the second reading of the Escheats Bill, on the understanding that no other Business would be proceeded with.

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Jackson) (Leeds, N.): I must support that view of what was agreed.

Mr. BARTLEY: Government Orders.

Mr. JACKSON: I take it as an understanding that the remaining Orders should not be taken to-night.

Mr. BARTLEY: If hon. Members will promise not to block my Bill so that I may take it at a quarter to 6 I consent; otherwise I must divide.

Mr. SEXTON: If Friends of the hon. Gentleman will take their blocks off my Bill I will.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 45; Noes 31: Majority 14.—(Div. List, No. 393.) [3.50. A.M.]

Debate *adjourned* till *To-morrow.*

MOTION.

——o——

LABOURERS' ALLOTMENTS (NO. 2.) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Staveley Hill, Bill to facilitate the provision of Allotments for the Labouring Classes, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Staveley Hill, Lord Henry Bruce, and Mr. Brooke Robinson.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 380.]

House adjourned at Four o'clock in the morning.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, 17*th August*, 1887.

MINUTES.] — New Writ Issued — *For* Huntingdonshire (Ramsey Division), *v.* William Henry Fellowes, esquire, now Lord de Ramsey, called up to the House of Peers.

Public Bill — *Committee* — Coal Mines, &c. Regulation [130]—R.P.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

——o——

COAL MINES, &c. REGULATION BILL.—[Bill 130.]

(*Mr. Secretary Matthews, Mr. Stuart-Wortley.*)

COMMITTEE. [*Progress* 16*th August.*]

[SIXTH NIGHT.]

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[*Sixth Night.*]

PART II.

General Rules.

Clause 50 (General rules).

Rule 33—Stretchers.

MR. BURT (Morpeth): I wish to move an Amendment which stands on the Paper in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for Bethnal Green (Mr. Howell)—namely, to leave out General Rule 33, for the purpose of inserting—

> "Where persons are employed underground, ambulances or stretchers, with splints and bandages, shall be kept at the mine ready for immediate use in case of accident."

The Rule provides that—

> "Where more than fifty persons are usually employed underground, stretchers and bandages shall be kept at the mine for use in case of accident."

I trust that the Home Secretary will accept the Amendment. It was one of the matters agreed upon at the Conference, and it has been urged again and again at the conferences of the workmen. It is scarcely necessary to point out that it is of the utmost importance, whenever an accident occurs, for those who may be injured to receive immediate attention. It is well known that when accidents have occurred deaths have frequently resulted on account of the want of appliances in the mine for the conveyance of injured persons to their homes. I am sure that hon. Members who are connected with the Army will be interested in this question, and will support my proposal, which is dictated in the interests of common sense and humanity. It is not necessary that I should make an elaborate speech; but I certainly regard the matter as one which deserves the serious consideration of the Committee.

Amendment proposed,

> In page 34, leave out general rule 33, and insert—"Where persons are employed underground, ambulances or stretchers, with splints and bandages, shall be kept at the mine ready for immediate use in case of accident."—(*Mr. Burt.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): In introducing the Rule I had the same purpose in view as the hon. Member for Morpeth (Mr. Burt), and it certainly appears to be desirable that that object should be carried out. My desire has been entirely that of the hon. Member; but I understand that he prefers his own proposal. I would suggest, however, that he should strike out of the Amendment the reference to "splints," because no unskilled person could apply splints properly, and I am afraid that a sufficient amount of knowledge and skill could not be found among ordinary workmen in a mine. The Amendment refers to the use of ambulances. I had ambulances in my mind; but I did not use the word, because it conveys the idea of a carriage or a vehicle of some kind, and in a great number of the mines it would be impracticable to employ vehicles. I thought it would be better to use the more technical words "stretchers upon which any wounded man may be carried." I desire to assist the hon. Member as far as possible; but I can assure him that in many of the mines it would be altogether impracticable to use ambulances. Many of the roadways are too narrow for anything of the kind. I would, therefore, suggest to the hon. Member the propriety of retaining the word "stretchers" and striking out "ambulances."

MR. BURT: I fully recognize the spirit in which the right hon. Gentleman has met the Amendment, and I admit the force of his objection in regard to the use of the word "splints." At the same time, I adhere to the opinion I have expressed that in some cases an ambulance is necessary. I quite see that splints may be useless unless there is a medical man to apply them. All I desire, however, is that they should be placed in the mine so that they may be available whenever it is practicable. With regard to ambulances, I speak from personal experience. I have known cases of men who have been injured having to be carried a considerable distance without any provision existing in the colliery for their proper conveyance, and the result has been that they have suffered severely from being shaken about.

SIR WALTER FOSTER (Derby, Ilkeston): Are we to understand that the right hon. Gentleman agrees to the word "splints?"

MR. MATTHEWS: Yes, as far as I am personally concerned.

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): While I am in favour of every practical remedy and appliance being provided, I am of opinion that care ought to be taken not to require the mineowners to do things that are impossible.

MR. J. B. BALFOUR (Clackmannan, &c.): May I point out that there is an alternative? The Amendment says 'ambulances or stretchers."

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Rule, as amended, *agreed to.*

Rule 34—Wilful damage.

Rule *agreed to.*

Rule 35—Observance of directions.

Rule *agreed to.*

Rule 36—Books and copies thereof.

THE CHAIRMAN: The Amendment of the hon. Member for Glamorganshire (Mr. A. J. Williams) is not in Order. These are not special rules for a particular mine, but general rules.

MR. A. J. WILLIAMS (Glamorgan, S.): Then, at what stage of the Committee can I bring my Amendment forward?

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member may bring it up as a new clause.

MR. PICKARD (Yorkshire, W.R., Normanton): The next Amendment is in my name; but I must point out that there is a slight error in it which, perhaps, the Committee will allow me to correct. I propose to leave out the second word "at" in line 27, after the word "office," and insert the words "and in." The rule will then read in this way—

> "The books mentioned in these Rules shall be provided by the owner, agent, or manager, and the books, or a correct copy thereof, shall be kept at the office and in the mine, and any Inspector under this Act, and any person employed in the mine may at all reasonable times inspect and take copies of, and extracts from any such books; but nothing in these rules shall be construed to impose the obligation of keeping any such book or copy thereof for more than 12 months after the book has ceased to be used for enteries therein under the Act."

My contention is that these books should be kept in the mine as well as in the office.

Amendment proposed, in page 24, line 27, after "office," leave out "at," and insert "and in."—(*Mr. Pickard.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'at' stand part of the Rule."

MR. MATTHEWS: I must point out that this is a general rule, and that there are many mines in the country in which it would be impossible to have any office under ground in which the books could be kept. I admit that there are various things which cannot be dealt with by a general rule, but it may be dealt with by special rules. There are, however, many mines in which books could not be kept.

MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.W.): Why not?

MR. MATTHEWS: For instance, they could not be kept in proper preservation in a place where there is a large quantity of dripping water. The question is one which ought to be dealt with by a special rather than a general rule, because this rule applies to all mines, and it cannot be suggested that in every mine throughout the country it is either practicable or desirable to keep books.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): As a matter of construction, I would submit to the right hon. Gentleman that words might be inserted imposing an obligation upon the mineowners to establish an office in every mine. I would suggest that it would be quite sufficient to say that wherever there is an office it should be necessary to keep the books there.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

MR. MASON (Lanark, Mid): I have to move in the same Rule, in line 29, after "mine," to insert "or anyone having the written authority of any Inspector or person so employed." I know that the miners attach great importance to this Amendment, and I trust that the Government will accept it.

Amendment proposed, in page 34, line 28, after "mine," insert "or anyone having the written authority of any Inspector or person so employed."—(*Mr. Mason.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. STUART-WORTLEY) (Sheffield, Hallam): Of course, the workmen would have the right to inspect the books under this clause; but it might not be altogether desirable in all cases to allow the books to be inspected by strangers.

MR. MASON: In the event of an accident occurring a workman may be injured, and may not be able to inspect the books for himself. These books are not of any secret nature, and I think it is desirable that the relatives of the workman, for instance, should have a right of examining them.

Mr. MATTHEWS: Surely a fellow workman could act for a wounded man. The Amendment, I am afraid, would admit any stranger, which I think would be objectionable.

Mr. MASON: An injured miner may have friends outside the mine who would be able to give him considerable help in the matter, and as these books are in no respect secret, it may be of importance that persons acting for the workman should have power to inspect, for instance, the registers kept in the mine. In many cases it may be desirable that there should be an inspection of the books, in order to satisfy the families of injured men in regard to the real facts of the case.

Mr. A. J. WILLIAMS: I entirely agree with the hon. Member for Lanarkshire (Mr. Mason) that it is desirable to give the workmen the power of appointing some independent person to go down the mine and inspect the books. There is a great deal more in the Amendment than appears at first sight. I know there is a strong feeling among the miners, especially in large mines upon this point. Many of them are anxious to have a periodical inspection, but they feel that unless this were made compulsory it might be considered ungracious on their part to send in an unfavourable Report. I hope the Government will accept the Amendment, and will consent to make the inspection compulsory.

Mr. JOICEY (Durham, Chester-le-Street): I hope the Government will give way, because I cannot see the slightest weight in the objection they have taken to the Amendment. At the same time, I do not see that this right of inspection will be of any practical benefit to the miners.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Rule, as amended, *agreed to.*

Rule 37—Periodical inspection on behalf of workmen.

The CHAIRMAN: The next Amendment, in the name of the hon. Member for the Normanton Division of Yorkshire (Mr. Pickard), does not seem to me to be admissible. It would make the Rule applicable to particular mines, whereas it is proposed to be inserted as a general rule.

Mr. A. J. WILLIAMS: The next Amendment is in my name. It is a very small Amendment—namely, to leave out "may" in Rule 37, in order to insert "shall." The Rule says—

> "The persons employed in a mine may from time to time appoint two of their number to inspect the mine at their own cost, and the persons so appointed shall be allowed, once at least in every month, accompanied, if the owner, agent, or manager of the mine thinks fit, by himself or one or more officers of the mine, to go to every part of the mine, and to inspect the shafts, levels, places, working places, return airways, ventilating apparatus, old workings, and machinery. Every facility shall be afforded by the owner, agent, and manager, and all persons in the mine for the purpose of the inspection; and the persons appointed shall make a true report of the result of the inspection, and their report shall be recorded in a book to be kept at the mine for the purpose, and shall be signed by the persons who made the inspection; and if the report state the existence, or apprehended existence, of any danger, the owner, agent, or manager shall forthwith cause a true copy of the report to be sent to the Inspector of the district."

My Amendment, instead of making this provision permissive, will render it compulsory. These inspections, to my mind, are the most important inspections that can be made. Representing as I do a large mining constituency, I know, as a matter of fact, that the inspections are not carried on periodically, and there is a strong impression that the men do not like to make them. In my opinion, they ought to have sufficient courage and independence to enable them to carry on an inspection, seeing that their lives and safety are in their own hands. If the Government oppose the Amendment, I have no wish to press it; but I must express my firm conviction that, unless these inspections are regularly made, this clause, in nine cases out of 10, will be a dead letter. I beg, therefore, to move this Amendment, which will make it obligatory that every colliery shall be inspected by the workmen once a month.

Amendment proposed, in page 34, line 36, leave out "may," and insert "shall."—(*Mr. A. J. Williams.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'may' stand part of the Rule."

Mr. MATTHEWS: I entirely share the views of the hon. Member that in every colliery this work of inspection should be periodically undertaken. I believe that nothing would more readily tend to promote a good understanding between the employers and the men. The hon. Member, however, proposes to insert "shall" instead of "may," but this is one of the instances in which the words at the beginning of the clause, "so far as is reasonably practicable" come in. What are to be the consequences to the workmen themselves if they do not make this inspection periodical? Are proceedings to be taken against them if they have failed to do it? Is it the object of the hon. Member, in inserting this word "shall," to authorize the taking into custody for the purpose of having them fined and proceeded against by summary jurisdiction, of workmen who have failed to comply with this rule? That is one objection against making the rule imperative—namely, the difficulty of enforcing the demand. I do not think that we could trust to any summary jurisdiction to compel an inspection on the part of the workmen. If workmen are to be fined for not making the inspection, they would certainly look upon the rule with disapprobation and disgust. I certainly think it will be better to authorize and empower the workmen to make an inspection without compelling them to do so. Whenever they think there is danger they will have the right of demanding an inspection, and of making an investigation into the matter themselves.

Mr. A. J. WILLIAMS: If the right hon. Gentleman would allow the inspection to be made by other working-men I would accept that alteration, but I attach very great importance to this power of making the inspection imperative.

Mr. BURT: I entirely sympathize with the object my hon. Friend has in view in moving the Amendment; and I also agree with him in attaching the utmost importance to an inspection by the workmen. I advocated the principle at the time it was imported into the existing Act, and I think it is one of the most valuable provisions of that Act. Whenever I have had an opportunity I have endeavoured to impress upon the workmen the importance and duty of carrying it out; but when my hon. Friend goes to the extent of making the inspection compulsory, I would point out to him that there are practical difficulties in the way. Wherever the workmen are organized, and have trades unions—whatever difference of opinion there may be as to the value of trades unions—this work of inspection is usually carried out. But where you have no such organization how are you to do it? Would you institute proceedings against individual workmen because, unless you impose some penalty, and endeavour to make the rule effective, there would be very little advantage in inserting it in the Act. For this reason I think the Amendment is impracticable. But my hon. Friend has done good service in calling the attention of the workmen to the importance of availing themselves of this provision. If I disagree with my hon. Friend in this matter, I fully appreciate the valuable services he rendered to the miners in connection with the Royal Commission, and I know of no one who has done more to secure the protection of life and property in mines. At the same time, I do not think that it would be desirable to bring in workmen and others who are not employed in the mine, and allow them to inspect the works. I think that that would be very undesirable.

Mr. A. J. WILLIAMS: After what my hon. Friend has said, I shall not insist upon the Amendment, but will withdraw it at once. My hon. Friend spoke about the action of trades unions. Unfortunately the time has not yet arrived when the workmen in all the mines have been thoroughly organized, but I believe that the system of trades unions is being very rapidly developed.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I propose in the same rule to move an Amendment which stands on the Paper in the name of the hon. Member for Merthyr-Tydvil (Mr. C. James)—namely, to leave out the words "of their number," in order to insert "practical miners." The rule provides that "the miners employed in the mine may from time to time appoint two of their number to inspect the mine." Now this is an Amendment which, in my opinion, is of very considerable consequence to those parts of the country where the organization which has been referred to by the hon. Member for Morpeth is not as perfect as it is in Northumberland, Durham, and parts of Wales. In many of the mines very great difficulties have been experienced in getting men to consent to take upon themselves what is regarded as the invidious duty of inspecting the arrangements made by their employers. They feel that if by doing so they offend the employers, even if at the moment they may not be visited with pains and penalties, yet they may possibly in the future suffer from having put themselves forward in the matter of inspecting the mine. It is very much like the case of the Greek warrior who wanted to be protected from the wrath of Agamemnon for all time. It is for a similar reason that the men desire to be able to appoint men who are beyond the reach of the mine-owner, whose anger the men themselves are afraid of incurring. Although it may not be a matter of much consequence where the miners' organization is very powerful, and they are able to assert their rights and impose their will upon the employer, yet it is of very great consequence in Scotland and parts of England where the organization of the miners is very weak, and where an inspection of this kind is only undertaken with fear and trembling.

Amendment proposed, in page 34, line 37, leave out "of their number," and insert "practical miners."—(*Mr. Arthur O'Connor.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'of their number' stand part of the Rule."

SIR WALTER FOSTER: If the Amendment is accepted, it may result in the appointment of men to inspect the mine who are not themselves working in the particular mine which it is proposed to inspect. If the appointment of such men be considered undesirable, then I think it would be better to leave these words in, and add after the words "two of their number" the words "being practical miners."

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: The object I desire to effect is, that the men appointed shall not necessarily be employed in the mine.

MR. T. D. BOLTON (Derbyshire, N.E.): The difficulty may be met by saying "two of their number, or two practical miners," so that it would cover the case of men who are not strong enough to act by themselves. I know that that state of matters does exist in some parts of the country, and that the men in reality do not dare to appoint two of their number to make the necessary inspection. Under these circumstances, I would ask the hon. Gentleman to substitute "or two practical miners."

MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM: I trust the hon. Member will accept the suggestion of the hon. Member for Derbyshire (Mr. T. D. Bolton). This very point of having two men appointed who are not employed in the mine is a matter which the miners of Scotland specially insist upon. They do not charge anything against the mine-owners, nor are they anxious to fight the matter on personal grounds. They make no insinuation that they are subject to intimidation; but there are men who have been accustomed all their lives to treat their managers and owners as a sort of superior beings, and they cannot bring themselves to act contrary to their wishes, even when they know that justice and right are on their side. I may say that a proposal to this effect was adopted unanimously in the miners conference, and that it is invariably carried out where the miners organization is strong enough to insist upon inspection.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I am ready to accept the suggested Amendment, but I think it would be practically nugatory, because, if we say "two practical miners," it would still be open to the workmen to choose any two of their own number.

MR. T. D. BOLTON: My desire is that the men themselves should appoint two of their own number, and this is an instruction to them to do so, and in doing so, they would be able to appoint two practical miners who were connected with other mines. I think it is desirable that they should have the power of appointing two men other than those who are working in the mine.

COLONEL BLUNDELL (Lancashire, S.W., Ince): There is no objection on the part of the mineowners to an inspection of the mine by the workmen, and it is desirable that they should make such an inspection, but the reason the workmen very rarely avail themselves of the rule, is simply because they are not paid for conducting an inpection. If they were entitled to be paid for their work, as examiners are, that fact might, I think, prevent any difficulty.

MR. W. ABRAHAM (Glamorgan, Rhondda): The object of giving the workmen this power is to enable them to ascertain accurately the state of the mine. That is the object of this general rule, and if you are to appoint two practical miners to discharge the duty, I do not think that you ought to be tied down to the very mine in which the men are employed. I have no desire to use any harsh expression upon the subject, but I could mention a few cases where men employed in the mine, having made an examination of this kind, have been badly treated afterwards in consequence. As there is nothing to lose, and a very great deal to gain by the adoption of the Amendment, I hope the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary will concede the point.

MR. DONALD CRAWFORD (Lanark, N.E.): An inspection by the men themselves is worth all the other inspection put together; but there is some doubt whether, as the clause now stands, that sort of inspection could be frequently carried out. I am sensible of the force of the objections which have been urged by the Home Secretary to the proposal that the inspection should be compulsory. I am prepared to admit that the inspection cannot be made compulsory, but I think it is our duty to provide for an inspection in some other manner. Now, in Lanarkshire and in other parts of the United Kingdom where there is not a strong organization among the miners themselves, this power to inspect the mine by the working men is a completely a dead letter, and until Parliament revives it and makes it cease to be a dead letter, and a really useful and effective enactment, it will be impossible to put any Mines Regulation Bill upon a practical and satisfactory footing. I would, therefore urge upon the Committee the propriety of accepting the Amendment of the hon. Member for East Donegal as it is proposed to be amended by my hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire (Mr. T. D. Bolton).

SIR JOSEPH PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): As I understand the objection of the hon. Member for Morpeth, it is against taking men from one mine to inspect another. My own opinion is that it would be highly objectionable to give power, in this Bill, to the miners to make an inspection from time to time, and then to allow them to decline to make the inspection themselves, but to bring in their neighbours without limit. If we enact provisions of that nature, it will be clear that the miners themselves are unfit to protect their own lives and interests. Let me ask what the Government inspection has been established for? The Government Inspector is bound to come whenever he is called upon by the men working in the mine in order to save them from the kind of obloquy which appears to have attached to them in Scotland, but which certainly does not attach to them in any other place that I know of. All I can say is that I could at this moment lay my hand on at least 500 miners who are capable of passing an examination in scientific attainments. Indeed, I should be prepared to-morrow to find 80,000 miners in the North of England who are enrolled in the very best Provident Societies. As a matter of fact, I do not know many cases where I could not lay my hand upon a man who is quite as capable of sitting here as a Member of this House as I am myself, or any other hon. Member, and yet it seems to be inferred that working colliers are such fools that they cannot be trusted to look after their own lives and interests. I believe that before many years have passed this measure will be looked upon as a thing belonging to the past, and as being applicable only to a very crude state of society. I am certain it will be found that there are many men among the large body of working miners who are far better able to take care of their own interests than 670 Members sitting in this House. I cannot help thinking that the attempt we are now making to nurse these men is altogether uncalled for. Are we to take them to their work, and put their comforters around their necks, bring them back when their day's labour is ended, and tuck them up in their beds at night? This is a kind of grandmotherly legislation which I do not think the men themselves will appreciate.

MR. PICKARD: I rise to support the Amendment. I speak only of Yorkshire, because I know more about Yorkshire than any other county; and I feel convinced that when this measure has passed, and it is put in force, unless there is some such provision as this, the men who have been employed to examine the workings in a mine, and who have reported unfavourably of them, will be liable to be turned away either directly or indirectly from the colliery or pit in which they have been working. It will be impossible for them to accept the terms which may be offered to them, and they will feel themselves bound to leave the colliery. It is all very well for the hon. Baronet to talk about grandmotherly legislation; but I know that the Amendment is very necessary, because managers do put a gag on miners employed in the pit, and if any man chooses to speak his own mind, as certain as he does so the manager will lay hold of the fact as an excuse for getting rid of him. I therefore urge upon the Home Secretary, as he has already accepted many Amendments in the hope of making the Bill really workable, that he will place in the hands of the men themselves the power of looking after their own interests. At the present moment, although there is a permissive power of inspection, the miners themselves feel that unless they are thoroughly organized they are unable to do the work. I do not understand that the Government intend to appoint a large number of Sub-Inspectors in order to see that this work of inspection shall be more efficiently carried out than it is at present; and if they do not intend to entertain a proposal of that kind, this Amendment is absolutely necessary for the protection of the miners, and even for the protection of the mineowners themselves.

Mr. C. S. KENNY (York, W.R., Barnsley): So far as the inspection of mines is concerned, the existing staff of Inspectors is altogether inadequate, even to permit an annual examination of each mine. The hon. Baronet the Member for Durham (Sir Joseph Pease) seems to doubt the necessity of examining the mine.

Sir JOSEPH PEASE: No, no!

Mr. C. S. KENNY: I would only remind hon. Members that the Commission on Accidents in Mines reported strongly upon the great importance of an inspection of the mine; and year after year the Reports of the Inspectors have urged the necessity of an adequate and thorough inspection. I find that attention has been called to the violation of the principle involved in this clause, and also to the irritation which its exercise produces. We were told in the Report of the Inspectors for 1886 that over and over again this power of inspection was not exercised in the way in which it ought to have been. It was only in a comparatively few instances that any inspection whatever was carried out, and the general feeling seems to have been that whenever an inspection has been made there has been a tendency, on the part of the employers, to make it unpleasant for the workmen. Even when the inspection has taken place, it has been unsatisfactory, because the workmen themselves have evinced an inclination to excuse anything that they find to be wrong, and to make matters satisfactory to the masters. I think it is of the utmost importance that the miners should be able to appoint monthly Inspectors, and that they should have power to select men to peform the work of inspection who would be under no fear or terror, so far as the owners are concerned. We may be told, no doubt, that it is unreasonable to suppose that the mineowners will persecute men for giving a faithful Report; but I would submit to the Committee that the question is, whether this power is a reasonable one, and whether it does or does not exist? If it does exist, and an inspection takes place, the same evils will result, even if the power were real, and not imaginary.

Mr. MATTHEWS: I hope the Committee will not continue to discuss this small matter at any length.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: This small matter?

Mr. MATTHEWS: Yes; it is a very small matter, when we consider the other important questions which are to be brought forward. The hon. Member for Morpeth has himself said that inspection, in order to be satisfactory, should be conducted by the men employed in the mine.

Mr. BURT: The right hon. Gentleman does me no injustice. I did express that opinion, and I adhere to it. I think it is best that the workmen who are employed in a particular mine should be the men to inspect that mine, and I must say that most of the cases which have been referred to are entirely outside my own experience. As a matter of fact, I believe the condition of things is such that the only satisfactory inspection should be conducted by the miners employed in a particular pit. But, at the same time, I do not think that any harm would result if the Home Secretary were to accept the Amendment, and, by so doing, concede that there are cases in which it is necessary that independent outsiders should be brought in. It has been pointed out that whenever an action of that kind would be necessary it would only be so because the men who are working in a pit are so disorganized that they are incapable of protecting themselves. In such a case it is likely that their interests would be better secured by getting men employed in other mines to conduct the inspection.

MR. MATTHEWS: I am quite willing to meet the views of hon. Members opposite if I can. I quite agree with the importance of an examination of the mine by the working miners, and I am, therefore, willing to accept in substance the Amendment of the hon. Member for Derbyshire, by inserting after "two of their number" the words "or any two practical working miners."

COLONEL BLUNDELL: May I suggest to the Committee that the effect of this proposal would be to establish an independent and unofficial staff of examiners. I cannot say that I concur with the proposal to place this power of selecting examiners not employed in the mine in the hands of the working miners themselves, seeing that it will take away responsibility from the persons who ought to be held responsible—namely, the manager, the agent, and the mineowner. I do not think it is advisable that that should be done.

THE CHAIRMAN: I must point out to the Committee that if the words were inserted "two of their number, or two practical working miners," it would suggest that two of their number were not practical working miners. I think it ought to be "two other practical miners."

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Amendment proposed to the said proposed Amendment, to insert after "number" "or two other practical working miners."

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. MATTHEWS: I think it would be better to say "two practical working miners."

MR. FENWICK: I agree with the right hon. Gentleman that "two practical miners" would be preferable. I attach the greatest importance to retaining the words "two of their number."

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! Those words are retained. The question now is what words are to be inserted after the word "number."

MR. FENWICK: Then I submit that "any two practical miners" ought to be the wording of the Amendment. If the Home Secretary can see his way to accept those works I think much valuable time may be saved. If he does not, I am afraid it will be necessary to have a debate which may extend to some length. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will prevent further waste of time by accepting the Amendment.

MR. MATTHEWS: I made an offer to the Committee some time ago, and there is a very slight difference between the words I propose to accept and the words "two practical miners."

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): The objection is a very simple one, because the Amendment which the Government propose to accept only provides that the men who are to be employed to inspect the mine shall be taken from some other pit than the pit which is to be examined, and there is a fear that the men selected under such circumstances, and who would, of course, be easily identified, may be made amenable to the discipline of the manager afterwards for the course they have taken.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I desire to move an Amendment to omit from the Amendment the word "working." The right hon. Gentleman has spoken of this question as being a very small matter. So far from sharing that opinion, I am prepared to say frankly that if this Amendment is not adopted, as far as I can see, the Bill will not be worth accepting, at any rate, in those portions of the country where the miners are not thoroughly organized. It is perfectly clear that if you have an efficient system of inspection by practical miners themselves, acting on behalf of working colliers in the mines, that you would have a safeguard which at present does not exist. I think this is the most practicable and useful provision which can possibly be inserted in the Bill, and I know that the men themselves are exceedingly anxious to secure it. They feel that if they are compelled to accept "two of their own number" in any particular mine, or if they are restricted to "two practical miners at present engaged in the working of a mine," they will not be placed in that position of perfect independence which they consider necessary to attain in order that the work may be efficiently done. If we insert the word "working" we confine the inspection to men actually employed in the mine. Everybody knows that it would be very simple for an employer to lay his hand on any particular individual employed in his own mine who might be selected to perform this invidious duty, and he would be able to point out to neighbouring mineowners that these individuals had been lending themselves to a system which was opposed to the interests of the employers as a body. The fear which such action may inspire would be fatal to any system of efficient inspection by the men or their representatives, and it would be just as fatal to have the men drawn from another pit as it would be for the inspection to be adopted by the men employed in the pit themselves. If you have a man who is a practical miner, and who has been a practical working miner for years past, and who has the confidence of the men who select him, what difference can it make for the purposes of inspection whether in the present week, or the present month, or the present year, he is engaged as a working miner? Indeed, I would suggest that it is far better that he should not be a working miner, but that he should be in a position of perfect independence in respect of all the employers of labour in the country. With this view, I beg to move the omission of the word "working."

Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment, to leave out the word "working."—(*Mr. Arthur O'Connor.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'working' stand part of the proposed Amendment."

Mr. A. J. WILLIAMS: I am glad to find that the Committee are coming round to my view. I think it would be very much better, if it is practicable, not to take a working miner employed in the colliery. I therefore think we should be doing a valuable service by omitting the word "working," because there are a considerable number of collieries in certain parts of the country which are not properly organized. I think the effect of adopting the Amendment would be that in some districts the men would appoint practical working miners, who would become important additions to the body of official Inspectors, and who would really form an independent body of Inspectors. It is quite certain that the present staff of Inspectors would be altogether inadequate to discharge this duty; but I believe, further, that the colliers themselves would arrange to appoint thoroughly practical working miners to do the work, and that, in the end, the men so selected would be withdrawn from the work of the colliery, and would become the most important assistants to the work of inspection we could possibly get.

Mr. PICKARD: May I point out to the Home Secretary that in the event of a working miner being appointed to do continuous work of this kind, in the event of his going from one mine to another, the retention of the word "working" would place him in this position—that it would be impossible for him to examine any other mine than that in which he had been absolutely working himself.

Sir JOSEPH PEASE: I certainly entertain a strong objection to the omission of the word "working." If that word were excised, it would leave it open for any two practical miners who might be neighbouring mining engineers to be called in; and what I object to is that in that case it would not amount to an inspection by the workmen themselves. I am perfectly prepared to allow the working miners to appoint any two men of their own class they like; but we want to avoid any dispute among the workmen which might be involved by allowing the inspection of a colliery by mining engineers employed in neighbouring works. The words "any two practical miners not being mining engineers" would include all the secretaries of Trades Unions who have been practical miners, and would not involve the necessity of their being actually engaged in work at the time of their inspection. Mineowners do not object to an inspection being made by the men themselves; but what they want to avoid is that in any dispute among the workmen a colliery should be involved in an inspection by the engineer of a neighbouring mine.

Mr. PICKARD: That objection might be met by inserting the word "colliery."

SIR JOSEPH PEASE: The word "colliery" would not do, because we have ironstone mines, and the miners employed in them are not called "colliers."

MR. FENWICK: The same objection might apply to the use of the word "mining engineer," because we do not regard a mining engineer as a miner. My hon. Friend the Member for Barnard Castle says the use of the word "colliery" is objectionable, and that there are many miners who are not colliers. But the term is one which is thoroughly understood. May I point out to the Home Secretary that if he insists upon including the word "working" in the Amendment, it will have the practical effect of prohibiting the miners in any district from selecting any of my hon. Friends around me to undertake an inspection of a mine, notwithstanding the fact that many of them have had very considerable experience in the working of mines. I submit that if the Amendment is carried in its present form, it will be quite open to any owner to object to any hon. Member of this House, however great his practical experience may have been. The effect of the Amendment would be to shut out myself and many of my hon. Friends from acting in the capacity of Inspector of a mine, although some of us have had 20 and 30 years' experience as working miners. I do not think that that is the intention of the Home Secretary; but I am afraid that it would be the effect of the Amendment if the word "working" is retained in it. I therefore trust that the right hon. Gentleman will feel inclined to drop that word.

MR. MATTHEWS: The compromise which I offered to the Committee was that these inspections, if conducted by outsiders, should not be carried out by a class of professional men who are not really working miners. What I was anxious to secure was that the Inspectors should be men engaged in the actual working of a mine, and not amateur Inspectors. That is what is meant by the Amendment. I intend no more than that, and I think that no more is effected by it. Am I to understand hon. Gentlemen opposite to say that they cannot trust the working miners employed in the mine themselves, and that, therefore, it is desirable to go outside, and to obtain the assistance of men who may have been working miners, but who are professional men, not really engaged in the working of a mine?

MR. FENWICK: I am sorry that the knowledge possessed by the right hon. Gentleman of the law and its administration is not such as to lead him to conclude that if the word "working" is retained in the Amendment it will be sufficient to prevent either myself or any of my hon. Friends from acting in the capacity of Inspector. I think any lawyer would say that the retention of the word "working" would effectually prevent us from acting in any such capacity.

MR. TOMLINSON: What we object to, and what we are not prepared to submit to under this clause, is that men who may have been working miners years ago should come in now as unauthorized Inspectors. It would provide no additional safety for the workmen that such men should be able to come in to inspect the mine when their knowledge may be altogether out of date. I do not see why we should allow such persons any greater latitude than men who are practical working colliers employed in the mine.

MR. WARMINGTON (Monmouthshire, W.): I must take exception to the law as it has been laid down by the Home Secretary. I doubt very much whether any Court of Law could be got to say that a working miner is a different person from a man working in a mine. That being so, I would suggest that we should have a practical miner, or a practical person who is, or has been, a working miner, and who has been so within a reasonable period. I think that would meet the views of my hon. Friends; but if we leave in the words "working miner," the person appointed as Inspector must be a person who at that moment is working in the mine.

MR. T. D. BOLTON: I should like to point out to the Home Secretary what would be the effect of this Amendment without the word "working." All these men could do would be to report the state of the mine, and if danger is apprehended to call the attention of the Inspector of the district to that danger. That is the entire amount of their power. Then what possible harm could it do if this report is made by a man who is a practical miner, but who at the actual time at which he makes his inspection is not working in connection with any mine? I hope the Home Secretary will take that point into consideration, and will allow this discussion to close by withdrawing the word "working," the retention of which will only occasion great annoyance and inconvenience to the men, and cannot possibly do any good.

COLONEL BLUNDELL: I do not think that the Home Secretary would be well advised to leave out this word. The real effect of the Amendment would be to provide for the appointment of an unofficial Inspector of the mine, who might be any man the miners might choose to select. I should value very much the opinion of miners actually employed in a mine; but I do not think it right to have an unofficial inspection. The only real course is to appoint two men who are employed in the mine selected by the miners themselves, and I think they ought to be encouraged to carry out periodical inspection. I do not think, however, that we ought to frame the clause in such a way as to make it possible to appoint a miners' agent to conduct the inspection.

SIR JOSEPH PEASE: I would venture to suggest that the words to be inserted should be "or any two persons not being mining engineers, who are, or have been, practical working miners."

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I have no objection to withdraw my Amendment in favour of those words.

Amendment to the Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. MATTHEWS: As I desire to bring the discussion to a close, I am quite ready to withdraw my Amendment also.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Question proposed, to insert the words "or any two persons not being mining engineers, who are, or have been, practical working miners. — (*Sir Joseph Pease.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. TOMLINSON: I am very sorry to feel it my duty to oppose the Amendment; but I do so on the ground that if it is adopted a man may be appointed who was working in a mine 20 years ago, and then took up with agitation. [*Cries of* "Agreed!"] I certainly know that there are men of that character, and I am afraid that we may run the risk of handing over the inspection of a mine to agitators who really know nothing about the present conditions under which a mine is worked.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

On the Motion of Mr. TOMLINSON, Amendment made in page 35, line 2, after "shall," by inserting "forthwith."

Rule, as amended, *agreed to.*

MR. DONALD CRAWFORD: I now propose to add a new rule—

> "Rule 38.—No person shall be allowed to work alone in the mine until he has had three years' experience of working in a mine under the direct supervision of a skilled workman."

I may say that representations have reached me from all parts of the country in favour of an Amendment of this kind. The miners feel that their lives are placed in very great danger in consequence of the employment of entirely unskilled labour in a very dangerous work. I do not think that it is necessary to argue at any length in favour of the Amendment. I will only make this remark, that I have been informed that lives have been constantly in danger by inexperienced men being allowed to work in mines. I have no objection to accept an Amendment which may make provision for the labour of boys employed in leading horses and others not actually employed at the fall of the workings.

Amendment proposed,

> In page 35, line 8, after rule 37, insert—"Rule 38. No person shall be allowed to work alone in the mine until he has had three years' experience of working in a mine under the direct supervision of a skilled workman."—(*Mr. Donald Crawford.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted,"

MR. MATTHEWS: I am afraid that I cannot accept the Amendment. I regret to say that these words—

> "No person shall be allowed to work alone in a mine until he has had three years' experience of working in a mine under the direct supervision of a skilled workman,"

are very vague and indefinite. What sort of work does the Amendment apply to? Does it mean that if a man has been engaged for three years in one kind of work he may then go to another description of work of which he has had no experience at all; or is it intended that every man, before he gets regular employment in a mine, is to undergo a period of apprenticeship?

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: As I understand the object of my hon. Friend, it is to secure that no person shall be allowed to work as a hewer or coal getter in any working place in a mine until he has had three years' experience. Many persons have written to me making a similar suggestion, almost in the very words of this Amendment; but most of them desire the restriction to be applied to persons who are actually engaged in a working place in getting coal.

MR. BURT: I can assure the right hon. Gentleman that this is an important Amendment in the direction of protecting life. There was very little of the evidence which came before the Royal Commission, to which more importance was attached than that which related to the number of accidents which happen from unskilled persons being allowed to perform certain kinds of work in the mines. The Amendment may require some modification; and the hon. Member who moves it has himself intimated that in its existing form it is probably too strict. It deals, however, with a matter of considerable importance, and I certainly hope that something in the direction indicated will be adopted.

MR. TOMLINSON: The last thing that any mineowner would wish would be that unskilled workmen should be employed in the mine. What I want to know, however, is how you are to carry out a provision of this kind—namely, that no man is to be able to work alone until he has had three years' experience in the mine. What is to be the machinery by which you are to be able to find out that fact?

MR. BROADHURST (Nottingham, W.): I think the Home Secretary was somewhat unnecessarily severe upon my hon. Friend the Member for North-East Lanark. The object of the Amendment is perfectly clear, and it is to provide that no man shall be permitted to hew or cut coal in a mine until he is able to give some guarantee that he has a knowledge of the work, and can safely take his place among other men employed in the mine. The right hon. Gentleman knows very well that it is the custom in most trades and professions in this country to require an apprenticeship, and if apprenticeship is necessary in any case, I am certainly not acquainted with any industry in which it is more necessary than in getting coal. May I add that the right hon. Gentleman himself must have underwent a considerable apprenticeship before he was called to the Bar, and that he must have passed difficult examinations.

An hon. MEMBER: No; he had only to eat a certain number of dinners.

MR. BROADHURST: The qualification, then, for the Bar is eating dinners. I certainly was not aware that that was the only qualification. However, there is a kind of apprenticeship required, and I think that an apprenticeship in regard to mining matters is quite as necessary as an apprenticeship in many other industries and professions. If steps were taken to enforce an apprenticeship a great deal more strictly than we do now in regard to mining, I think it would be far better for that industry and for the prosperity of the country.

MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM: There is one consideration I should like to bring under the notice of the Home Secretary—namely, that there has been constant complaints of the employment of unskilled labourers in mines who have been entirely unfit for the work, and their employment has resulted in frequent accidents.

MR. F. S. POWELL (Wigan): May I point out that the words of the Amendment, as they stand, are very wide? I think that the intention of the hon. Member for North-East Lanark (Mr. Donald Crawford) in moving the Amendment is perfectly plain; but the words he proposes are so wide that they would include all the boys and other persons who are engaged in minor operations in the mine. The Amendment would seem to lay down that no young person whatever should be employed in the mine until he has had three years' experience. I am quite sure that that cannot be the intention of the hon. Member.

MR. HANDEL COSSHAM (Bristol, E.): I think that the object of the clause now under discussion is a very good one; but I would suggest that "three years" is too long a term, and that it would be better to insert "two years." As the Amendment is now worded I am afraid it would be unworkable. I do not object to the object of it; but I think that the limit it imposes upon persons employed in the mine before they are to become coal-getters is too long.

Sir JOSEPH PEASE: I rose with my hon. Friend for a similar purpose—namely, to point out that the Amendment, as it stands, would never work, because a little boy who is now employed at one of the ventilation doors is necessarily left alone for hours together, and generally begins a miner's life in that way. I do not see how it would be possible to carry out a provision that no person should be allowed to work alone until he has had three years experience of working in the mine. As a rule, no pitman goes in and works alone.

Mr. DONALD CRAWFORD: I am afraid I am suffering the penalty of not having expressed the Amendment in sufficiently precise terms; but in introducing it I stated that I did not mean it to apply to boys or persons in charge of horses, but only to men employed in getting coal in the working places. I am quite ready to accept the Amendment of the hon. Baronet, that—

> "No person shall be allowed to work alone at a working place as a hewer unless he is under the direct supervision of a skilled workman."

If I can do anything to promote unanimity on the part of the Committee I shall be glad to do so.

Sir JOSEPH PEASE: I would propose the substitution of these words—

> "No person shall be allowed to work alone as a hewer in a working place until he has had two years' experience of working underground."

Amendment proposed to the said proposed Amendment,

> "After the word "no," to insert "hewer being allowed to work alone at a working place until he has had two years' experience of working underground."—(*Sir Joseph Pease.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be inserted stand part of the Amendment."

Mr. W. ABRAHAM (Glamorgan, Rhondda): I hope the Committee will not accept this Amendment, especially with regard to the Proviso that he shall have had two years' experience.

The CHAIRMAN: That point is not now before the Committee. That will form a subsequent question.

Mr. WARMINGTON: I would suggest that the words "in a mine" would come in better afterwards.

Question, "That the words 'in a mine' stand part of the Amendment," put, and *negatived.*

Question, "That the words 'as a hewer in a working place,'" put, and *agreed to.*

Amendment proposed, to leave out "three" in order to insert "two."

Question proposed, "That 'three' stand part of the proposed Amendment."

Mr. W. ABRAHAM (Glamorgan, Rhondda): I am of opinion that this is about the most important part of the whole Bill we have been discussing. The necessity of a periodical inspection has been urged over and over again as the only means of guarding against accident and loss of life from casualties in the working of a mine. It is, I think, of the utmost importance that no person should be allowed to be employed as a coal-getter until he has had some years' experience of such work. The training he ought to have should be of a practical character; for instance, a person who has been employed for two years in driving horses cannot be said to have had a practical training as a coal-getter.

An hon. Member: Would it not be better to say "until he has had two years' experience of working under ground?"

Mr. W. ABRAHAM: That would not be enough, because driving a horse would be working under ground, and so would be the building of a stall. If time permitted I could give numberless instances to prove the necessity of a practical training. About 41 per cent of the number of deaths which occur from accidents in mines arise from the want of practical knowledge. I should like to call the attention of the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary to the Report of some of Her Majesty's Inspectors on this subject. If the Committee will permit me, I will read one or two extracts. Mr. Cadman says—

> "The principal safeguards on which miners must rely against these accidents are careful and intelligent attention to the timbering of the roof and sides, and keeping a constant watch for any change or peculiarity which may appear in the overlying strata. The responsibility of securing his working place rests with the collier, subject, of course, to the direction of the overman, and very considerable skill and knowledge of the local peculiarities of the seams worked is necessary to make a good timberman. For this reason, it is very de-

sirable that young men should be practically trained in this branch of their duty, and have the benefit of the experience of old and tried colliers, who, by years of service, have become acquainted with the best ways of dealing with the dangers and the difficulties which are daily and hourly presenting themselves."

These are the words of one Government Inspector, and they go far to prove the necessity of practical training. Mr. Hall, another of Her Majesty's Inspectors, speaking of timbering, says—

> "The death roll caused by falls of roof is so serious and continuous, and so stationary without showing signs of improvement, that it would appear as if some extraordinary step is needed to bring about a favourable change, and without weighing too nicely the reasonableness of any demand in this direction."

For these reasons I hold that it is essential to secure that men before they are employed as coal-getters should have had a practical training.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): I think that it is of importance to secure that experienced men who have had a practical training shall be employed in working a mine. I have all my life protested against the doctrine which has been laid down that a system of apprenticeship as applied to manual labour is a system to be condemned, for I see hon. Members opposite who belong to the learned professions, and they are quite aware that before they were able to select their profession they were required to pass through a term of probation. It is an absurdity to suppose that a similar provision should not apply to the manual professions as they may be called. An hon. Gentleman just now talked of introducing a system of protection, but in what respect does the protection provided, both in regard to the law and to the profession to which I belong, differ from the protection which should be afforded in the case of coal-mining?

THE CHAIRMAN: The present Amendment does not raise the general question, but only whether the period is to be two or three years.

MR. DILLON: I do not know what course the Representatives of labour intend to take on this occasion, but I think they are perfectly entitled to demand protection for the miners. I shall express no opinion upon the matter myself, because it is not one which I am competent to discuss; but I do think that those who represent the working miners in this House are just as much entitled to demand whatever number of years' experience they consider necessary for the protection of life as the members of the medical profession are in their profession, in the interests of the general public.

MR. FENWICK: If I am in Order, I should like to submit an Amendment which I think might have the effect of bringing this discussion to a close, so that we may be able to get on with the rest of the Bill. I would suggest that the words should be—

> "No person be allowed to work in a mine as a coal-getter until he has had two years' experience of working in the mine under the supervision of a skilled workman."

I hope the Home Secretary will accept the Amendment, because I believe it would meet the whole case.

MR. MATTHEWS: I understand the desire to be that any person who may have been employed in the mine as a horse-driver shall not be allowed to work as a coal-getter unless he has had two years' experience of coal-getting.

MR. FENWICK: Yes; that is what we want.

MR. MATTHEWS: Then I think the object will be secured by saying "two years' experience of such work."

MR. FENWICK: I think the Amendment suggested by the Home Secretary is preferable to my own, and I am quite willing to accept it.

MR. HANDEL COSSHAM: There is only one point I would venture to suggest. During the time a novice is acting under the supervision of a skilled workman, he would, of course, only receive limited wages, and it is the highest ambition of every man to get as much as he possibly can. I know that in many instances a miner refuses to marry until he attains the position of a coal-getter. It would, therefore, be desirable to make the term of probation as short as possible consistent with adequate protection to the workmen.

MR. TOMLINSON: Is it intended that the clause should be retrospective? Will it be the duty of the managers to go through the mines and ascertain whether all the men who are working are duty qualified?

MR. MATTHEWS: No.

Amendment to the Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Original Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Amendment proposed,

After Rule 37, page 34, insert: "No person not now employed as a coal-getter shall be allowed to work alone as a coal getter at the face of a working until he has had two years' experience of such work under the supervision of a skilled workman."—(*Mr. Matthews*).

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. TOMLINSON: I fail to see what means there are of knowing whether a man has had the necessary experience or not.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

THE CHAIRMAN ruled that Amendments relating to the inspection of mines, and to the testing of safety lamps, in the names of Mr. Maurice Healy and Mr. P. Stanhope, were out of Order.

On the Motion of Mr. JACOBY, Amendment made,

In page 35, at end of clause by adding: "That in any case where a dispute occurs between the men and the manager of any mine respecting the carrying out of the Mines Regulation Act, and the inspector be applied to, he shall notify both parties, in order that they may appoint representatives to accompany him while prosecuting his inquiry."

Question, "That those words be there inserted," put, and *negatived.*

MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM moved to add, at the end of the clause, a provision that "men and boys be allowed to ride as soon as they come to the shaft."

MR. FENWICK: As a question of Order, I wish to know whether the Amendments which stand in my name and in that of the hon. Member for Morpeth are covered by previous Amendments. My Amendment provides "that the sump hole at the bottom of the shaft shall be protected by fencing."

THE CHAIRMAN: The Amendment of the hon. Member is provided for by Rule 12, which requires the fencing of the entrances to shafts.

MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM: My object in moving the Amendment is to provide for a case which frequently occurs in Scotland, where men and boys are detained for an undue length of time in the works. After having been at work for eight or nine hours they are frequently kept at the bottom of the pit simply in consequence of the caprice of the manager. As the engines are working all the time it would be quite easy to take up the men and boys as soon as they reach the bottom of the pit. I think the Amendment is one with which the Committee generally will agree. I believe that the Representatives of the working miners are strongly in favour of it, and I trust that the Home Secretary will accept it.

Amendment proposed, in page 35, at end of Clause, to add "That men and boys be allowed to ride as soon as they come to the shaft."—(*Mr. Cunninghame Graham.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

MR. TOMLINSON: May I remind the hon. Member that it may be necessary, in order to secure the safety of the mine, to carry on the business of it in a particular method; and if any individual is to be at liberty to stop the ordinary working at any moment great inconvenience might result, as well as danger in the working of the mine."

MR. S. WILLIAMSON (Kilmarnock, &c.): I have an Amendment on this point which, if this Amendment is carried, may be ruled out of Order, although it is much wider in its scope. My Amendment provides that—

"When any workman, employed in contract work underground, in any mine to which this Act applies, shall desire to leave off work, it shall be incumbent on the mineowner or manager to arrange for his being taken to the surface without any unnecessary delay; and it shall be the duty of the mineowner to adopt a special rule as hereinafter provided for carrying this stipulation into effect."

MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM: I do not wish to propose any Amendment that is unreasonable, or to interfere in any way with the proper working of the mine. But I deny that the adoption of this Amendment will interfere with the working of the mine. All I desire is that when the men and boys have finished the recognized hours of labour they may be allowed to go up the pit, and not be detained, while minerals are being carried up, entirely at the caprice of the manager.

THE CHAIRMAN: I must point out to the hon. Member that the Amendment does indirectly interfere with that of the hon. Member for Kilmarnock (Mr. S. Williamson), which is of a much wider character.

Mr. BURT: I would make an appeal to my hon. Friend the Member for North-West Lanarkshire to withdraw his Amendment, in order that the full discussion which the subject deserves may be taken when the Amendment of the hon. Member for Kilmarnock is reached.

Mr. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM: Under the circumstances I will not press the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I have now to move, in page 35, at end of Clause 50, to insert—

> "That, in cases where gas has been found in a mine, no furnace shall be used for purposes of ventilation for the twelve months immediately following; and, when fans or other mechanical appliances are used as a means of ventilation, that two sets of machinery be kept ready for action, the one to be used in case of accident to the other."

This Amendment is one of very considerable importance, and I have been asked to take charge of it. I do not think it is necessary to say much by way of explanation. The Amendment consists of two parts, the first of which deals with the ventilation of the mine in regard to matters which I do not think have been disposed of by previous Amendments; and the second part relates to the necessity, where mechanical appliances are used as a means of ventilation, of providing two sets of machinery, in the case of any accident occurring to one of them. I think it is essential to provide that, in case of accident, the machinery shall not be rendered wholly incapable of bringing the men up from the pit. In a similar way that a ship has a double steering apparatus, I propose to provide that a mine shall have a double set of ventilating machinery.

The CHAIRMAN: I must point out to the hon. Member that the first part of the Amendment is inconsistent with Rule 2, which was agreed to yesterday.

Mr. CONYBEARE: I was afraid you might hold that the question of ventilation in respect of gas has already been dealt with, and that there might possibly be an objection to the first part of the Amendment. But the same objection will not apply to the second part of it.

Amendment proposed,

In page 35, at end of Clause 50, add "When fans or other mechanical appliances are used as a means of ventilation, that two sets of machinery be kept ready for action the one to be used in case of accident to the other."—(*Mr. Conybeare.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

Mr. MATTHEWS: No doubt it is very desirable that wherever possible there should be spare machinery; but there are a large number of small mines throughout the country where it would be impossible to carry out this provision. If the matter is dealt with at all it must be dealt with by a special rule. It would be impracticable to put the small mineowners to the expense of providing this double machinery.

Mr. JOICEY: I hope the hon. Gentleman will not press the Amendment. He seems to be under the impression that the moment an accident happens in a mine all the ventilation is cut off, and it becomes dangerous to remain in the pit. That is not the case; and after an accident has happened a fair amount of ventilation can be kept up for several hours, and there is ample time for the men to get out of the mine. It is therefore unnecessary to put the mineowners to this additional expense.

Mr. CONYBEARE: After the explanation of the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary, I will not press the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Mr. PICKARD: I have now to move to add as a New Clause—

> "That no smudge or small coal shall be left down any mine which the Inspector of the district has stated to be fiery, or dry, or dusty."

My object is to prevent, if possible, an accident arising from spontaneous combustion. We think it would be much more safe if all materials of the kind were required to be brought out of the mine, so that spontaneous combustion may be prevented. We believe that if all the coal is brought out of the mine, both large and small, the danger would be considerably lessened.

Amendment proposed,

In page 35, at end, add, "That no smudge or small coal shall be left down any mine which the Inspector of the district has stated to be fiery or dry and dusty."—(*Mr. Pickard.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

Mr. MATTHEWS: I think the words of the Amendment are too wide to be inserted in a general rule. Every man who left smudge or small coal down a mine would be liable to penalties, if the Inspector of the district had declared it to be fiery or dangerous. The words of the Amendment are very indefinite, although I sympathize with the object of the hon. Member, and probably it will be possible to insert a special rule.

Mr. PICKARD: In the Yorkshire mines all the coal is riddled and the dust taken away, and that is what I want to secure in all cases.

Mr. MATTHEWS: I will give the matter the best consideration I can, with the view of dealing with it by a special rule.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 51 (Penalty on non-compliance with rules).

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): We have added a great number of general rules, and I am not sure that the words "unless he proves," in line 15, will be quite right enough. We will consider this matter in conjunction with what has been already done before the Report.

Question, "That this Clause stand part of the Bill," put, and *agreed to.*

Special Rules.

Clause 52 (Special rules for every mine).

Mr. TOMLINSON (Preston): I have on the Paper an Amendment on page 35, line 27, after "mine," to insert the words—

> "Such special rules shall specify which, if any, of the mines or seams of mines to which they apply, are dry and dusty or are fiery."

I have put that Amendment on the Paper, but I find that it does not meet with the support I had hoped for. Therefore, I will not move it.

Clause *agreed to.*

Clauses 53 to 59, inclusive, severally *agreed to.*

Part III.—Supplemental.

Legal Proceedings.

Clauses 60 to 62, inclusive, severally *agreed to.*

Clause 63 (General provisions as to summary proceedings).

Mr. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith): I have put down the following Amendment, in line 5, to leave out "months" and insert "weeks." The sub-section, if amended as I propose, would read—

> "Any complaint or information made or laid in pursuance of this Act shall (save as otherwise expressly provided by this Act) be made or laid within three weeks from the time when the matter of the information or complaint arose."

I have put this Amendment down at the request of some of the colliery managers. If an interval of three months were to elapse after the subject matter of the complaint arose before information were laid, it might be very difficult to ascertain what had occurred three months before. Especially would it be difficult to obtain the evidence which would be required, and which would be most valuable—independent scientific evidence. I beg to move the Amendment which stands in my name. Of course, if it is opposed by those who are but acquainted with the working of mines, I should not press it, but I have been asked to move this, as I say, by managers of the Cumberland mines.

Amendment proposed, in page 40, line 5, leave out the word "months" and to insert the word "weeks."—(*Mr. J. W. Lowther.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'months' stand part of the Clause."

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): I quite sympathize with the objects of the managers the hon. Member refers to, to whom vicarious responsibility attaches under this Act, but it certainly seems to me that three months is a period quite short enough.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I beg to move an Amendment in line 7, after the word "arose." I wish to add "such complaint or information may be made or laid by a common informer." The object of this is that there may be open to those who cannot be injuriously affected by anything which has happened, to give evidence supporting complaints upon which summary decisions may be taken. I will not detain the Committee longer than is necessary to state the object of the Amendment.

Amendment proposed, in page 40, line 7, at the end of the sub-section to add "and such complaint or information may be made or laid by a common informer."—(*Mr. Arthur O'Connor.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. MATTHEWS: I think the hon. Member's Amendment is unnecessary, unless it were meant to over-ride a limitation such as that in Clause 66. The words "common informer" are not applicable. Anyone can prosecute, and the only offence in which consent is necessary to a prosecution is a case in which there is vicarious responsibility, where the owner, agent, or manager, is made responsible for what is done by someone else—in a case where the person prosecuted has done nothing wrong himself, but can be prosecuted for the fault of another.

MR. BURT (Morpeth): My hon. Friend the Member for East Donegal has moved this Amendment at the request of the miners. It is a subject which has often come before our conferences, and, no doubt, so far as the phraseology is concerned, it is objectionable. It is open to the objection raised by the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary, who, no doubt, is an authority upon this point. At the same time, the object aimed at was to give a power of prosecuting in the case of managers and others. The right hon. Gentleman sympathizes with the object we have in view in this Amendment, and I do not know whether he may not find it possible to deal with the matter in some other way. If it is possible, I have no doubt he will do it.

MR. MATTHEWS: But under Section 66 any person may prosecute another who has committed an offence under the Act. Clause 66 introduces a limitation against the prosecution of owners, agents, and managers, for offences which they have not committed themselves—that is to say, vicarious offences—offences committed by some person in the colliery, for whom the owner, agent, or manager is made responsible. In such a case Clause 66 imposes a restriction. If the hon. Member wishes to object to that—and I am not sure that he does—the proper place to raise the objection would be on Clause 66. For instance, if an owner does not provide an ambulance, or a stretcher, or splints, or bandages, such as we have provided earlier on that he shall keep at the mine, he has committed an offence himself and can be prosecuted by any person. On the other hand, if a workman commits a fault he can be prosecuted himself; but the owner, agent, or manager may also be prosecuted for his fault.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I would point out that Section 66 provides that a prosecution shall not be instituted except by an Inspector, or with the consent in writing of the Secretary of State in cases where the offence committed is not committed personally by the owner, agent, or manager, but by somebody under him for whom he is responsible. Now, what I want to secure is that, with regard, at any rate, to all other cases, it shall be possible to prosecute on the evidence of a common informer. Is there any objection to the introduction of these words—any solid objection? It does not appear to me that they could do any harm.

MR. F. S. POWELL (Wigan): If there is anything in the proposal as contained in the clause it will apply as much against the employer as against the workman.

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES (Durham, N.W.): I think it will save time if I point out that there is an Amendment on the Paper standing in the name of the hon. Member for Normanton (Mr. Pickard) to leave out the clause and insert a clause which I need not read, which suggests the very thing which is sought to be brought about by my hon. Friend and by other hon. Gentlemen behind me. There the question is properly raised as to whether it should be left in the hands of any person deputed by workmen, or by any workman ordinarily engaged in the mine, to bring an action—I believe that is the limitation put on it—to prosecute any owner, agent, or manager, even for an offence that is not personally committed by them. I think my hon. Friend would serve his object better by withdrawing the Amendment, and taking the discussion on the Amendment of the hon. Member for Normanton.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I beg to move the following Amendment, standing in the name of the late Member for the Forest of Dean (Mr. T. Blake). At the end of line 12 to insert the following sub-section:—

> "Any person may give evidence as a witness by virtue of this Act upon oath, or upon affirmation or declaration, to speak the truth signed by him. Any person who shall give false evidence upon oath, affirmation, or declaration as aforesaid, shall be guilty of, and may be convicted of, perjury, and may upon conviction be sentenced to imprisonment, with or without hard labour, for any period not exceeding two years."

The object of this is to permit evidence to be given either on oath, affirmation, or signed declaration. Unless there is any objection to this on the part of the Government, I shall not delay the Committee by attempting to argue the matter. I will simply move the Amendment.

Amendment proposed,

> In page 40, at end of line 12, to add the following sub-section;—" Any person may give evidence as a witness by virtue of this Act upon oath, or upon affirmation or declaration, to speak the truth signed by him. Any person who shall give false evidence upon oath, affirmation or declaration as aforesaid, shall be guilty of, and may be convicted of, perjury, and may upon conviction be sentenced to imprisonment, with or without hard labour, for any period not exceeding two years."—(*Mr. Bradlaugh.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

Mr. MATTHEWS: Either these words express what is the existing law of the land as to judicial oaths, or they do not. If they do, they are unnecessary; and if they do not, they are improper in this Bill. This is not an Oaths Bill, but a Coal Mines Regulation Bill. It is not a Bill for dealing with oaths in any way. If any limitation is to be made in the law as to judicial oaths, it should be done in an Act of Parliament dealing with that matter.

Mr. BRADLAUGH: The Amendment does not propose to alter the law, but merely to simplify the practice. At the present moment, as the right hon. Gentleman well knows, if a witness under this Act required to give his evidence upon affirmation, he would have to satisfy the person to whom he applied to be allowed to make that affirmation that he was a person upon whom an oath would have no special binding effect on his conscience. I do not wish to go into the whole argument involved in the case which hon. Members will remember was argued before the Court of Appeal; but I shall certainly press this Amendment to a Division if the Government do not consent to it. With a number of men in the position of those for whom this legislation is intended, it is absurd to put upon them the necessity of entering into the discussion of a technical and metaphysical question as to whether a particular form is or is not binding upon the conscience. I regret that the Government should show any hesitation about this at all.

Mr. MATTHEWS: I cannot consent that the law shall be one thing in a criminal inquiry with regard to coal mines, and another thing in every other inquiry.

Mr. BRADLAUGH: It is not intended to make it one thing in an ordinary inquiry and another thing in the case of coal mines; but it is intended to clear up what is now doubtful. I have had occasion to bring before the House several times the conduct of magistrates, County Court Judges, and Coroners, who placed different and contradictory constructions on what was meant by the present state of the law. I will not continue the argument. I was anxious to ascertain the opinion of the Government on the matter, and I shall certainly press for the opinion of the Committee.

Mr. HANDEL COSSHAM (Bristol, E.): I shall support this Amendment, because I wish to see the general law bearing upon the taking of oaths altered.

Colonel BLUNDELL (Lancashire, S.W., Ince): All we have to do is to recognize conscientious objections which are not religious; but we ought not to upset the whole system of the general law with regard to oaths.

Mr. BRADLAUGH: Everyone at present can affirm if he can succeed in convincing the presiding Judge, whoever he may be—if he can "satisfy" the Judge, according to the Affirmation Act of 1869, that "an oath has no binding effect on his conscience." It is only to obviate the necessity for a subtle argument between the Judge and the counsel as to a collier or anyone else about to give evidence, that I wish to insert these words. My desire is to put a stop to disgraceful squabbles on the subject of the oath.

Question put.

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 75; Noes 109: Majority 34.—(Div. List, No. 394.) [2.20. P.M.]

Clause *agreed to*.

Clause 64 (Appeal to Quarter Sessions).

MR. WOODALL (Hanley): I have an Amendment on the Paper to leave out, in line 15, the following words:—

"By which conviction, imprisonment, or a fine amounting to or exceeding one-half the maximum fine is adjudged."

I wish to leave out the limitation in the section, and to enable any person who feels aggrieved by any conviction made by a Court of Summary Jurisdiction to appeal to the Court of Quarter Sessions in manner provided by the Summary Jurisdiction Acts. I am not, however, disposed to press the Amendment, if the right hon. Gentleman thinks it should not be accepted.

Amendment proposed, in page 40, line 15, to leave out from the word "by" to the word "adjudged," both inclusive, in line 17.—(*Mr. Woodall.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): As I understand there is a strong objection entertained to this Amendment in certain quarters, I will not therefore undertake to press it till I hear what the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary has to say about it.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I think the hon. and learned Member, by his Amendment, would extend the right of appeal beyond that contained in the Summary Jurisdiction Acts. The hon. Member will find the principle as to these appeals laid down in 42 & 43 *Vict.* c. 49, s. 19. This section gives the right of appeal where imprisonment or a fine amounting to or exceeding half the maximum fine is imposed, the object being to stop appeals in cases where trumpery fines have been inflicted.

MR. WOODALL: I should like to have heard the opinion of some hon. Members below the Gangway upon this subject. I have been assured that there is a strong feeling amongst the miners that there should be an appeal allowed in all cases.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn*.

Clause *agreed to*.

Clause 65 (Parent or guardian liable for misrepresentation as to age) *agreed to*.

Clause 66 (Prosecution of owners, agents, and managers for offences).

COLONEL BLUNDELL (Lancashire, S.W., Ince): This clause tends to make the law equal—employers and employed. I think it is right so far; but I wish to make an exception in favour of the manager of a mine. The manager may be an employer, or he may be himself employed; but whether or not he holds a position of great responsibility. The condition of the whole of the mine practically depends upon him. His position is analogous to that of the captain of a ship. He, or the under manager, has to come in contact with the workmen and has to issue orders of all sorts, some of which may be distasteful to the men, although warranted by the circumstances of the position. The danger I want to provide against is, that where there are a great many young men, as there always are in a mine, they shall not be allowed to bring frivolous complaints against the manager merely, you may say, for the sake of having a lark. I trust hon. Members below the Gangway will see that there is nothing in this proposal which is detrimental to the interests of the miners, but that they are only precautionary, in order to avoid such an evil as I have pointed out.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): What Amendment is the hon. and gallant Member moving?

COLONEL BLUNDELL: All the Amendments I have here affect the same point. My object in moving them is to prevent a manager from being at the mercy of a common informer who may lodge frivolous complaints against him.

MR. MATTHEWS: But which Amendment is the hon. and gallant Member moving? Because I agree with one of them—namely, that which would put the under manager in the same position as the manager. The third Amendment in the name of the hon. and gallant Member, however, that in line 29, which says leave out "not committed personally by such owner, agent or manager," I object to. These Amendments are totally different in effect.

Colonel BLUNDELL: I was about to move the Amendment in line 28, "before 'manager,' leave out 'or.'" But I will not do so. I will move the Amendment in line 29.

Mr. MATTHEWS: Then I will ask leave to move the hon. and gallant Member's Amendment in line 28.

Amendment proposed, in page 40, line 28, after the word "manager," to insert the words "under manager," and so similarly throughout the Clause.—(*Mr. Matthews.*)

Question, "That those words be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

Sir JOHN SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield): I beg to move to leave out the word "not" after "Act," in line 29. The clause says—

> "No prosecution shall be instituted against the owner, agent or manager of a mine for any offence under this Act not committed personally by such owner, agent or manager, &c."

I move to leave out the word "not."

Amendment proposed, in page 40, line 29, after "Act," leave out the word "not."—(*Sir John Swinburne.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'not' stand part of the Clause."

Mr. MATTHEWS: I cannot conceive that the hon. Baronet is serious in moving this Amendment. The effect of it will be this—that no prosecution shall be instituted against the owner, agent, or manager for any offence under this Act, committed by himself, unless he is prosecuted by the Inspector or with the consent of the Secretary of State. But in cases where an offence is not committed personally all the world is to be at liberty to prosecute. He is liable for the wrong of another man, and all the world is to be at liberty to prosecute.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the hon. Baronet withdraw his Amendment?

Sir JOHN SWINBURNE: Yes.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Colonel BLUNDELL: I beg leave to move, in line 29, to leave out "not committed personally by such owner, agent, or manager." I think a manager who may be employed should be exempted from the possibility of being attacked by a common informer for something he does in connection ordinarily with his office as manager. I trust this Amendment will be fairly considered on its merits. I bring it forward in the interest of the safety of the men in our mines, believing that the safety of our mines depends on the managers. There are, as I say, many young men who will be delighted to bring complaints against the manager merely for a lark, and I wish to protect these persons from anything of that sort. I would make them responsible for anything they do personally, and my Amendment would leave them liable to prosecution, if a prosecution is approved of by the Inspector as representing the Secretary of State.

Amendment proposed, in page 40, line 29, to leave out the words "not committed personally by such owner, agent, or manager."—(*Colonel Blundell.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

Mr. MATTHEWS: I think I must emphatically decline to agree to this Amendment. I think it is only reasonable that every workman in a mine should have a right to prosecute the owner, agent, or manager, if he does anything personally that is wrong. I think all these four persons—that is to say, the owner, agent, manager, or under manager, require some protection when they are subjected to that extremely harsh rule which is quite exceptional in connection with coal mines, and which does not exist in any other branch of our law—that is to say, that they are made criminally responsible for action that they do not themselves know of. That criminal responsibility has been attached to them for reasons of public policy which I need not now go into. It is a very harsh law, and when it is introduced there must be a kind of guarantee with regard to it. When a man has done wrong himself and the men suffer, I could not consent that he should not be liable to prosecution by any workman.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Mr. MATTHEWS: I beg to move the Amendment which stands in my name—namely, in page 40, after line 37, to add—

> "No prosecution shall be instituted against a Coroner for any offence under this Act, except with the consent in writing of a Secretary of State."

The object of this Amendment is to exempt Coroners from prosecutions. I move this in consequence of representations I have received from Coroners, who are a useful body of men; but they have pointed out to me that under Clause 49 they are required to do a number of things, such as sending notice to the Inspector of the district; to adjourn inquests under certain conditions; to advise the Inspector of defects in and about a mine; not to allow certain persons to be sworn or to sit on the jury, and so on. For neglect of the duties contained in Section 49 he would be liable to prosecution under that Act; and, seeing that these gentlemen occupy a dignified and responsible position, I think it only desirable that before they shall be prosecuted in such a way the consent of a Secretary of State should first be obtained in writing.

Amendment proposed,

> In page 40, after line 37, to add the words "no prosecution shall be instituted against a Coroner for any offence under this Act, except with the consent in writing of a Secretary of State."—(*Mr. Secretary Matthews.*)

Question, "That those words be there added," put, and *agreed to.*

Question proposed, "That Clause 66, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

Mr. PICKARD (York, W.R., Normanton): I beg to move that the clause be struck out, on the ground that, so far as prosecution is concerned, we as workmen will, under this clause, have no power whatever. It appears first of all that every owner, agent, or manager is to be exempted unless he commits a personal offence. It is a well-known fact that the owner, or agent, or certificated manager, is not always there, and very often delegates his authority to another person; and we think the workmen over whom the person so delegated has authority should have the power of prosecuting the manager in the same sense that the manager has power to prosecute the workman if he commits any offence under this Act. I therefore beg to move the omission of the clause.

Question put.

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 126 Noes 72: Majority 54.—(Div. List, No. 395.) [3.10 P.M.]

Clause 67 (Report of result of proceedings against workmen).

Question proposed, "That the Clause stand part of the Bill."

Mr. TOMLINSON (Preston): I have two Amendments on the Paper—to leave out, in line 41, "within 21 days of the hearing of the case," and to insert "annually, on or before the first day of January;" and also, in line 42, to leave out "thereof," and insert "of all proceedings so taken during the then preceding year." I will not, however, move these Amendments.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Clause 68 (Summary proceedings for offences in Scotland).

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): I beg to move, in line 4, to leave out all the words after "be"—that is to say, to leave out the words—

> "Constituted of two or more Justices of the Peace, sitting as Judges in a Justice of the Peace Court, or of the Sheriff or some other magistrate or officer for the time being empowered by law to do alone any act authorised to be done by more than one Justice of the Peace, and sitting alone or with others at some Court or other place appointed for the administration of justice."

Then I propose to insert the words "the Sheriff." The effect of this will be to render the Court of Summary Jurisdiction "the Sheriff," instead of the Justices of the Peace as proposed in the clause. It is thought better that such inquiries should be conducted by the Sheriff, and not left to the local Justices.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman move to strike out all the sub-section after the word "be?"

Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD: I do.

Amendment proposed, in page 41, line 4, to leave out all the words after the word "be," and insert the words "the Sheriff."—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR (Clackmannan, &c.): I entirely approve of the alteration. Complaint is made in Scotland that certain classes of prosecution for mining offences might be heard before the Justices, and the desire was to have them universally held before the Sheriff or paid magistrate.

Question put, and *negatived.*

Question, "That the words 'the Sheriff' be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

Mr. S. WILLIAMSON (Kilmarnock, &c.): The object of the Amendment I have to move—namely, in line 33, after "provisions," insert the following section:—

> "(6.) In any inquiry in Scotland as to the cause of death or of serious injury, any relative of any person whose death may have been caused or who may have suffered serious injury by the explosion or accident with respect to which the inquiry or inquest is being held, shall be at liberty to attend and give evidence, and either in person or by counsel, solicitor, or agent, examine any witness,"

is to procure for relatives of any person killed or injured liberty to attend and give evidence, either in person or by counsel, and to examine witnesses, at an inquiry in Scotland. It seems that doubts were entertained as to the right of relatives to give evidence or examine witnesses at Coroners' inquests; but the Act of last year removed those doubts. We want now the same advantages in Scotland, which, if not originally given, at least are emphasized in Clause 49, Section 8. I admit that the Amendment may be subject to improvement; but I wish to give the right to relatives, where persons are seriously injured or have suffered death, to be present at inquiries either before the Fiscal or at a special inquiry, such as was held in the case of the *Daphne*, when Special Commissioners were sent down to institute an investigation. We desire that the relatives of persons injured or killed in this way in Scotland should have the same right that the relatives of such persons have in England, and I sincerely hope the Committee will endorse this Amendment. I think justice demands it.

Amendment proposed,

> In page 41, line 33, after "provisions," insert the following sub-section:—"(6.) In any inquiry in Scotland as to the cause of death or of serious injury, any relative of any person whose death may have been caused or who may have suffered serious injury by the explosion or accident with respect to which the inquiry or inquest is being held, shall be at liberty to attend and give evidence, and either in person or by counsel, solicitor, or agent, examine any witness."—(*Mr. S. Williamson.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: Might I suggest to my hon. Friend what I think will carry out his intention, and, at the same time, not render this clause open to certain objections which it would otherwise be open to? If he were to provide that his Amendment should apply to any public inquiry held under this Act in Scotland, and make it applicable to all kinds of inquiry provided under Section 46 of the Act, I see no objection to it; but I am sure my hon. Friend does not desire, in a small referential clause of this kind, to import into the law of Scotland the whole system of Coroners' inquests. That could not be done according to a decision that was given the other day, as the Committee will see. If my hon. Friend will do what I propose, probably the Committee will see its way to accept that or some similar clause. I move that after the word "Scotland" in the Amendment the words "under this Act" be inserted.

Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment, in line 1, after the word "Scotland," to insert "under this Act."—(*Mr. J. B. Balfour.*)

Question, "That those words be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: I would suggest another Amendment, to carry out the same idea. In the third line, which refers to "the inquiry or inquest," I would propose to leave out the words "or inquest."

Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment, in line 4, to leave out the words "or inquest."—(*Mr. J. B. Balfour.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'or inquest' stand part of the proposed Amendment."

Mr. TOMLINSON (Preston): I would point out that this would carry the appearance of relatives at inquiries under Clause 46.

Question put, and *negatived.*

Question proposed, "That the proposed Amendment, as amended, be agreed to."

Mr. J. B. Balfour

MR. TOMLINSON: I do not think the right hon. and learned Member for Clackmannan (Mr. J. B. Balfour) quite understands what he has done. In Clause 46, after full consideration, it was deliberately decided not to give relatives a right to appear at inquiries under it. The Amendment now proposed would have this result—that if the Home Secretary ordered an inquiry in England, the relatives of the injured persons would not have the right to appear; but if the Home Secretary ordered an inquiry in Scotland, those relatives would have the right to appear. The inquiries which would be held under this process would, therefore, be held in two ways.

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: I am quite alive to the fact that that would be the effect of the Amendment, and it is in view of that that I give my support to it. Might I point out that in Scotland we have no Coroners' inquests, and that, therefore, we have not the opportunity of having representatives of persons killed present at the inquests, with power to give evidence or to examine witnesses, as you have in England under the Common Law. Under these circumstances, as it is not proposed in this Coal Mines Bill to alter our whole system of procedure in these cases, it seems but reasonable that an opportunity should be afforded for the relatives of persons killed or injured to appear at the Secretary of State's inquiry. If this were not conceded, there would be no opportunity in Scotland for these people to appear at all. There would be no opportunity of appearing at such inquiries as were held in connection with the Blantyre colliery accident, or the upsetting of the *Daphne*. It is most important that persons should have the power of appearing in that way in carrying out inquiries in the interests of the public. I venture to submit that, inasmuch as this would be the only opportunity where such persons would be permitted in Scotland to attend an inquiry, to give evidence or examine witnesses, it would be throwing the whole process out of balance if the Amendment were not accepted as I propose. If the hon. and learned Member will reflect that in Scotland there will be an opportunity afforded for persons appearing at inquiries under this Amendment, as will be afforded in England, he will see that it is desirable to admit this proposal.

MR. TOMLINSON: I am not objecting to the Amendment, but I am pointing out how it will work. I am pointing out that by striking out the words "or inquest," and introducing the words "under this Act," may in England defeat the object of the inquiry.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): This Amendment would practically be an anomaly. We rejected a provision of this kind on Clause 46, which it was sought to apply to Great Britain generally. It was proposed to give the relatives this right in all cases; but the Committee refused to assent to the proposal on the ground that the inquiry was not one at which anyone had a right to appear. The provision applies not only to such cases as the *Daphne*, but to cases of inquiry where there has been no death. Therefore the hon. Member proposes that anyone should have a right to appear at these inquiries in this country; but that in Scotland they should have that right, though the two inquiries—the inquiry in Scotland and the inquiry in England—may be exactly identical in form. The hon. Member may be sure that if relatives are permitted to appear as a right it may make a great difference as to the course of the inquiry. If you give them a right to appear they will in all probability employ counsel, and go into the whole matter, as if the inquiry were an inquiry into a question affecting conflicting parties. As a matter of fact, however, the inquiry—and it was so decided by the Committee—would be a matter merely for the enlightenment of the Home Secretary, who will be the *dominus* of the whole proceeding. I have been concerned in several inquiries during the short time I have been Secretary of State, and my knowledge of the course which has been adopted with regard to them is that these persons are always allowed to attend; but that power is vested in those conducting the inquiry to stop them when they are irrelevant. When they are stopped in this way the Court can proceed to another part of the investigation. That would not be possible if an appearance was put in by these persons as a right, and they had the power of employing counsel and calling witnesses in the ordinary way.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): In order that something of this kind might be moved, I withdrew an Amendment I had on the Paper at an earlier period of the evening. It was put down to establish something like the Coroner's inquest in the case of fatal explosions in Scotlond. When I withdrew my Amendment I understood that there would be brought forward, perhaps by the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) at a later stage of the Committee, something to provide for this want, which admittedly exists in Scotland. Now, with regard to this particular suggestion, it seems to me that the inquiry would not be at all on the same footing as inquiries carried on in England, because inquiries carried on in England are on oath. Every witness is sworn; but, unless I am mistaken, the inquiry directed by the Secretary of State would be under some authority not competent to administer an oath. Therefore, the amount of importance and solemnity attaching to the inquiry in Scotland would not be at all the same thing as appertains to the inquiry in England. I would ask the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary whether he sees his way to make any Amendment in the clause by which this want that I refer to would be supplied?

Mr. MATTHEWS: There is power to administer an oath at these inquiries; but really we have discussed this whole question before, on Clause 46, and the proposal now submitted was negatived.

Mr. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox): There is one effect of this Amendment that I am sure my hon. Friend did not intend, and which it would be necessary to provide against if the Amendment were carried. According to the Amendment, the relatives of injured parties would have power to appear at an inquest. There might be claims to attend on the part of a vast number of parties, and I think if the proposal were accepted it would be necessary to limit it in some manner or other. I think that a limitation of this kind should be accepted—namely, that no more than one person should be allowed to attend as representing the relatives of the whole of the injured persons. There should only be one person with a right to appear by counsel to examine witnesses in the interest of the injured persons.

Mr. S. WILLIAMSON: I have read the words of Section 8 in Clause 49, and I do not see why all these evils should exist in Scotland which do not arise in England. The words in Section 8 are not the *ipsissima verba* of the Act of last year; but they are words put in by the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary. If these words are applicable to England, why not give us some similar words for Scotland? There is nothing in this Act bearing on the rights of relatives to attend at these inquiries in Scotland. If the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary is persistent in his objection to this Amendment, let him add these words after the concluding words of my Amendment—"subject, nevertheless, to the order of the Court."

The CHAIRMAN: I understand this Amendment refers to any inquiries under this Act. In the Amendment moved on Clause 46 it was proposed that at such inquiries the owner, agent, manager, or under manager, or any of the workmen of the mine, or any relatives of any person killed or injured, should be at liberty to attend and examine witnesses. That Amendment was negatived, and, being negatived, cannot be raised again.

Mr. S. WILLIAMSON: Allow me, with all deference to you, to point out that after Clause 46 was dealt with we came to Clause 49; and, in so far as the acceptance of this Section 8 of Clause 49 was concerned, the Committee overruled what was done on Clause 46. And I am simply pleading that Scotland should have the same right and justice that England has got under Clause 49 and under Clause 46.

The CHAIRMAN: This proposal affecting every inquiry under this Act does not refer to Clause 49, but to Clause 46. It is, therefore, inadmissible, having been negatived on Clause 46.

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I certainly am under the impression that the hon. Member for East Donegal (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) withdrew an Amendment in order to allow this point to be discussed, and we have been looking forward to the right to discuss this matter under existing circumstances. I ask you, Sir, with all respect, whether the words which the hon. Member now proposes do not convey additional matter, which exempts them from your ruling?

THE CHAIRMAN: No.

MR. S. WILLIAMSON: Before you put the Question may I ask the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary whether he will introduce some words on Report, which will do justice to the relatives of these people in Scotland? I think it is only fair.

MR. MATTHEWS: In consideration of the number of cousins in Scotland I will give my best attention to the matter.

MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.W.): I really must protest——

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order!

MR. CONYBEARE: This Amendment, as I understand, is solely applicable to Scotland. Does not that exclude it from the general application of Clause 46?

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! What is universal includes a particular application.

MR. S. WILLIAMSON: I think we had better let the clause pass.

Question, "That those words be there inserted," put, and *negatived.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 69 (Saving for proceedings under other Acts) *agreed to.*

Clause 70 (Owner of mine, &c. not to act as justice, &c. in proceedings under this Act).

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): The clause says—

> "A person who is the owner, agent, or manager of any mine, or a miner or miner's agent, or the father, son, or brother of such owner, agent, or manager, or of a miner or miner's agent, or who is a director of a company being the owner of a mine, ... act as a member of a Court of Summary Jurisdiction in respect of offences under this Act."

Well, I think that is scarcely wide enough. I think that a son-in-law or father-in-law are much more likely to be influenced than other relatives in cases of this kind. A man may have a son-in-law who is engaged with him in business; and I think it, therefore, desirable that we should extend the principle of the clause so as to include such relationship as this. Will the right hon. Gentleman promise to consider the point before the next stage of the Bill?

MR. MATTHEWS: Yes.

Clause *agreed to.*

Clause 71 (Application of fines).

MR. JOICEY (Durham, Chester-le-Street): I beg to move as an Amendment to this clause, in line 27, to leave out the words, "and shall be carried to the Consolidated Fund," in order to substitute—

> "Paid over to the Treasurer for the time being of any special or permanent fund, approved by the Secretary of State, established for the relief of sufferers by mining accidents, where the offence was committed, and where certain fines were inflicted."

I wish to insert these words because I had considerable difficulty, in a case which occurred in 1885, in getting fines paid over to the Miners' Permanent Relief Fund. I applied to the Home Secretary, and I found that the money had been paid over to the Consolidated Fund, and I was told in this House, both in answer to Questions and in private interviews, that it was quite impossible that this money could be paid over to the Miners' Fund, as it had gone into the Consolidated Fund. One of the right hon. Gentleman's Friends on the opposite side took it into his head to write a note, asking if it could not be paid over; and I discovered, to my astonishment, a short time afterwards, that the money had been paid over to the hon. and learned Member for Durham who sits on the other side of the House (Mr. Milvain). I think that there ought to have been no doubt on the matter, and on that ground I beg to move this Amendment.

Amendment proposed,

> In page 42, line 26, leave out "and shall be carried to the Consolidated Fund," in order to insert the words—"paid over to the Treasurer for the time being of any special or permanent fund, approved by the Secretary of State, established for the relief of sufferers by mining accidents, where the offence was committed, and where certain fines were inflicted."—(*Mr. Joicey.*)

THE CHAIRMAN: I have very grave doubts whether this is an Amendment which the hon. Member can move, as it proposes to deal with money which goes into the public funds. A private Member cannot move to apply public money to private purposes, however small the sum and however valuable the object may be.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): But I would point out that this is not money which has ever been public money. It is money which will have to be dealt with in the public funds ultimately, but until it is handed over to the Consolidated Fund it is not public money.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): On behalf of the Exchequer I would like to say a word on this matter. I would remind the Committee that at this moment the law of the land is precisely that which is proposed to be done by this Bill. The 68th section of the existing Coal Mines Regulation Act provides—

"That, except as aforesaid, all penalties imposed in pursuance of this Act shall be paid into Her Majesty's Exchequer, and carried to the Consolidated Fund."

Therefore a proposal of this kind is one which seeks to alter the existing law of the land. I think, under the circumstances, the hon. Member must see that the Government cannot consent to what he proposes.

MR. JOICEY: Under one of the clauses of the old Act the Home Secretary has power to hand over the money to some fund, and the reason this course was not adopted in this case to which I have referred was that it had already gone into the Consolidated Fund; but my view is that this money should go to the benefit of the sufferers in mining accidents. I believe the feeling of the Committee is with the Amendment, and I hope the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary will find some way of settling the matter.

MR. F. S. POWELL (Wigan): It appears to me that this Amendment is in the wrong place, and that it should come earlier in the clause.

SIR JOSEPH PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): We are always led into some difficulty or another when the words of an Amendment are not exactly before us. I appreciate the hon. Member's view, but I would call his attention to the fact that at the present moment the Home Secretary may direct the fines paid to be transferred to the relatives of the persons injured. All that my hon. Friend asks is that it should be obligatory on the Home Secretary to pay over this money to such persons as he thinks proper. It only goes into the Exchequer when the Home Secretary thinks it desirable that he should do so. We who take an interest in these miners' funds know what an enormous number of people they keep off the rates and maintain in comparative comfort; and I think the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary, when he sees that these funds are doing so much good, will let this money go directly into them, especially when the money arises from fines in connection with accidents.

THE CHAIRMAN: I said I had grave doubts as to whether this Amendment was admissible; but if it is admissible now it will be admissible on Report. I think, therefore, the hon. Gentleman would be well advised if he decided upon considering this matter and bringing it up on Report.

MR. JOICEY: Will the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department say what he is prepared to do?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I am not in a position to say at present; but I will consider the matter.

MR. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck): If it were accepted it would be necessary to leave out the words—

"A Secretary of State may (if he thinks fit) direct such fine to be paid to or distributed among the persons injured and the relatives of any persons whose death may have been occasioned by an explosion, accident, or offence, or among some of them."

I think, however, the proper time to consider this matter would be upon Report.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Clause *agreed to.*

Miscellaneous.

Clauses 72, 73, and 74, severally *agreed to.*

Clause 75 (Interpretation of terms).

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES (Durham, N.W.): I beg to move the Amendment which stands in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for the Bishop Auckland Division of Durham (Mr. Paulton). I should like to hear what the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State (Mr. Matthews) says as to this Amendment, having regard to Clause 20. I must say I entertain some grave doubts as to the practicability of the Amendment.

Amendment proposed,

In page 43, after line 18, insert the words "'part of a mine' includes every section having a separate intake and return air course."—(*Mr. Atherley-Jones.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.W.): I hope we shall have ample discussion on this important clause, as we are a good deal in the dark as to the absolute effect it will have. I trust some Member of the Government will give us the opinion of the Government, and also that we shall have some expression of opinion from the labour Representatives. It is not my wish to waste time or to trifle with the Committee; but really, when Amendments are before the Committee involving such very serious interests as I believe this does, it is more than a pity to let them go without having the subject dealt with thoroughly, and threshed out in all its bearings. With reference to this matter of separate intake and return air course, I should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary if it is not a fact that difficulties have arisen in the working of mines, and in regard to the whole system of ventilation; and whether it is not better that we should introduce some provision into the Bill dealing with the matter?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. STUART-WORTLEY) (Sheffield, Hallam): I am not aware of any clause where these words occur.

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES: I refer the Government to Clause 20. I think "part of a mine" is used in one other section.

MR. STUART-WORTLEY: No doubt it is necessary to define the words in Clause 20, and we will put these words in the clause on Report if we find we can do so without any inconvenience.

MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM: Why defer it until the Report stage when there is no practical difficulty in making the Amendment now?

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES: I think it would save the time and labour of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State if I were to point out a very substantial difficulty in the way of accepting this Amendment. Clause 20 provides that—

> "Where two or more parts of a mine are worked separately, the owner or agent of the mine may give notice in writing to that effect to the Inspector of the district, and thereupon each such part shall for all the purposes of this Act be deemed to be a separate mine."

I do not know whether it would be really the effect of the Amendment of my hon. Friend the Member for the Bishop Auckland Division of Durham (Mr. Paulton); but it seems to me the effect would be that every separate ventilating district would be compelled to have a separate manager and separate organization; that is the conclusion I draw from the Amendment. If that is so, the Amendment is perfectly impossible. I moved the Amendment, but I did so simply because I wanted guidance.

MR. MATTHEWS: I equally want guidance. Clause 20 is a clause to my liking.

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES: The effect of the Amendment seems to be this—that every ventilating district will by these words be constituted a separate mine.

Question put, and *negatived.*

SIR JOHN SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield): I beg leave to move to insert, after "person," in line 33, the words "holding a first-class certificate, and." Agents are made superior to managers, and therefore there is a strong feeling that agents should hold first-class certificates.

Amendment proposed, in page 43, line 33, after the word "person," to insert the words "holding a first-class certificate, and."—(*Sir John Swinburne.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. MATTHEWS: I think the hon. Baronet must be aware that the agent is in all cases the person who looks after the finances and business arrangements of the mine. He is not in mines generally a skilled person in mining; his duty is to look after the administration of the mine financially. I do not think it is desirable, or necessary, or expedient to require that he should be a person holding a first-class certificate in mining.

MR. W. ABRAHAM (Glamorgan, Rhondda): I am sorry to disagree with the right hon. Gentleman in this matter. In the district to which I belong, men have acted in the capacity of agents, and also in the capacity of general managers. [Mr. MATTHEWS dissented.] The right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary shakes his head; but I can give him half-a-dozen names in a moment.

MR. MATTHEWS: It cannot be so.

MR. W. ABRAHAM: The right hon. Gentleman says it cannot be so; but all

I can say is, that it is. This is the evil I endeavoured to point out yesterday—namely, that gentlemen under the guise of agents really act as general managers. Certainly we ought to avoid in any way relieving these agents from responsibility when they act as general managers, as, I maintain, many of them do. I may say, further, that in a number of collieries nothing can be done even by the managers themselves in the way of opening up the collieries without direction from the gentlemen who act as agents. The miners in South Wales have been objecting to this for a very long time. We have men supposed to be managers, but who, nevertheless, are obliged to take their orders from persons called agents. If persons who act as agents are not capable of obtaining a certificate of competency in mining, certainly they ought not to be allowed to act as general managers.

Mr. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck): Perhaps I may point out to the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary that the person acting as agent under this Bill is the person who, on behalf of the owner, has the power and care of directing the management of the mine. Now, if he is the person who is to have the care and direction of the mine he ought to be a person who is possessed of a first-class certificate within the meaning of this Bill. We know very well that the person who now acts in the capacity of agent is the person who has the complete care and control of the mine. The manager simply takes his instructions or directions from the agent, and without the agents' sanction he has very little power to cause any alterations to be made in the mine. If that is to be the understanding under the Bill we are now considering, I think it is very desirable that the agent, being the person who on behalf of the owner has the care and direction of the mine, should be possessed of a first-class certificate. The Home Secretary is not strictly accurate when he says that the agent simply attends to the finances of a colliery.

Sir JOSEPH PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): I think my hon. Friend (Mr. Fenwick) is a little mistaken in this matter. The agent under this Bill is not the manager of a mine—the manager is already provided for. The agent is the man who stands in the place of the absent proprietor or owner. Take my own case. Many years ago, before I was a partner, I had the practical control of a number of mines. I was then acting as agent for the firm to which I afterwards belonged.

Mr. MATTHEWS: I think hon. Gentlemen opposite might just as well insist upon the owner having a first-class certificate; the agent really takes the place of the owner. Of course, it is under the orders of his employers that the agent acts. If an employer gives a manager improper orders the manager ought to refuse to obey them; he is no more subject to the agent than he is to the owner. The agent is appointed simply because the owner, like the hon. Baronet (Sir Joseph Pease), cannot manage every one of his mines, and he puts an agent in his place.

Mr. W. ABRAHAM: I am very sorry our experience in this matter is so adverse to that of the right hon. Gentleman. If I am compelled to I will give an illustration. I do not want to give names here; but let me say that a complaint was made against the management of a mine in one of our daily papers in South Wales. The matter was taken up by the person who was recognized as the general manager, and the newspaper had to make a public apology; but a few months afterwards an accident occurred in the mine under the general management of this gentleman. I attended the inquest in order to ascertain what position this gentleman held, and I found he shielded himself behind the term of agent and not manager. We know, however, that he was general manager of five collieries. We contend that he was not a proper person to fulfil that important position unless he held a first-class certificate of competency.

Mr. ATHERLEY-JONES: This is an important matter, and I think there is some misapprehension on the part of the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary, or else the words of this clause are most unhappily chosen. The words are—

> "'Agent,' when used in relation to any mine, means any person having on behalf of the owner the care or direction of any mine or any part thereof."

Now, what is the care or direction of a mine? Surely the care or direction of a mine means something more than the financial position to which the right

Gentleman referred; it implies something more than the mere receipt of the revenue. Apart altogether from the words of the clause, I can bear out what has fallen from hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway. It is not at all an unusual thing for a very eminent engineer to have control of two or three collieries. He has a manager appointed to each individual colliery, and the manager of each individual colliery is bound to conform to his general directions, and even to his particular directions if he so wishes. The head viewer or agent, as he is termed and known as throughout the district, may be a very good man or he may be a very incompetent man; and it is, therefore, certainly undesirable that a properly qualified man should have to submit to the directions of one who is not a competent man in mining matters. I hope the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary will not think I am pressing this matter in any captious spirit. I think that, as a rule, agents are men who have all the qualifications that are necessary. In some instances, however, that happy state of things does not exist; and I do not see any reason why a person who occupies the position of agent, a person who has the care and direction of a mine, should not possess a first-class certificate. But I am willing to submit to a compromise. If the right hon. Gentleman will strike out the words "care or direction of any mine," and substitute some other words showing that the agent merely occupies a financial position, the difficulty may be met.

Mr. MATTHEWS: Will the Committee accept these words—

"'Agent,' when in relation to any mine, means any person acting as representative of the owner and superior to a manager."

Mr. W. ABRAHAM: That does not meet the case.

Mr. ATHERLEY-JONES: My hon. Friend (Mr. W. Abraham) says that that does not meet our point. Of course, it is known that the owner is superior to the agent, and that the agent is superior to the manager. What we desire is that the agent shall not interfere with the management or direction of the mine.

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): We have not considered what provisions there are in this Bill in which agents are mentioned. Take Section 17. There we find that the owner, agent, and manager are spoken of together. It appears to me that if this proposed Amendment or definition is to be of any value at all, we must carefully consider what are the powers given to the agents in the preceding part of the Bill. What possible harm can there be in the requirement that the agent shall have a first-class certificate? The right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary has met us by observing that you might just as well require the owner to take out a certificate. A very good thing too. Every owner should know something practical about the colliery from which he derives his fortune. But what I was going to say is this. According to what I recollect of the many provisions of this Bill, the agent, whatever definition you may give of him, is in a position of superiority in many cases to the manager. The agent is able to give orders. It is part of his duty to give orders to the manager. Supposing an agent knows nothing about the working of a mine; supposing he is not able to take out a certificate, he may give orders which a manager may be compelled to carry out, but which may be orders of a most ridiculous kind, involving probable disaster, or jeopardizing the lives of the miners. If the manager is bound to obey the orders of the agent, it appears to me the agent ought to be qualified to give orders of an intelligible character, and such as a manager may feel himself called upon to carry out.

The CHAIRMAN: Order, order! I must point out that this discussion is rather running in contravention of what has been already settled. The relations between the agent and the manager are defined in Section 21. Section 21 says—

"Every mine shall be under a manager, who shall be responsible for the control, management, and direction of the mine, and the owner or agent of every such mine shall nominate himself or some other person to be the manager of such mine."

And it provides that—

"A person shall not be qualified to be a manager of a mine, unless he is, for the time being, registered as the holder of a first-class certificate."

The relations of the manager to the agent are, therefore, completely settled.

Mr. BURT (Morpeth): So far as I know, the agent in the North of England would in every case hold a first-class certificate, or could immediately pass an examination entitling him to such a certificate. There would, therefore, be no practical difficulty in putting this provision in force so far as I am aware. At the same time, let me point out that the suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary does not at all meet the point raised by my hon. Friend the Member for the Rhondda Division of Glamorgan (Mr. W. Abraham) and others who have spoken in this debate—it would not at all alter the position of the agent. What we really want to accomplish will have to be met in another way — namely, by omitting all the words after "person" in line 33, and making the definition read—

> "'Agent,' when used in relation to any mine, means any person superior to a manager appointed in pursuance of this Act."

Whether that is an Amendment which will be accepted or not I cannot say; but it is an Amendment which would prevent an agent sheltering himself behind his subordinate—the manager.

Mr. MATTHEWS: Let me once more appeal to the Committee. Does anyone doubt that the owner is superior to the manager? I should think not. The manager must obey the owner's orders; but he must see that the orders of the owner do not contravene the Act of Parliament. Anyone can understand that the owner may be a child or a woman, or be a gentleman of great experience and knowledge like the hon. Baronet the Member for the Barnard Castle Division of Durham (Sir Joseph Pease); the agent is simply appointed to represent the owner. Hon. Members must not lose sight of that—the agent is the person the owner puts there to stand in his shoes and do all he would do. Clause 21 points out clearly the distinction between the manager and the owner or agent. I submit that the words that I have suggested would meet all the difficulties of the case. If anyone does anything in the mine contrary to the Act, the agent is liable to a criminal prosecution. The agent has the inherent power which belongs to every owner—he is simply the representative or double of the owner when the owner cannot be there. I beg the Committee to take a practical view of this question.

Mr. ATHERLEY-JONES: With the object of saving time, may I suggest that the right hon. Gentleman should reconsider these words? I understand he is prepared to agree to the omission of the words "care and direction of the mine."

Mr. MATTHEWS: Certainly.

Mr. ATHERLEY-JONES: Let me point out one or two double inaccuracies in what the right hon. Gentleman has just said. As a matter of fact, of course an owner who is a perfect layman never thinks of interfering with the management of a mine; but he very often appoints a person known throughout the whole district colloquially as agent. That person may have the care of half-a-dozen mines; but he may not be a person holding a first-class certificate. He gives directions in matters of detail in connection with the management of the mines to the managers who are under him. Anyone who is acquainted with the coal trade in the North of England will bear me out when I say that the appointment of such a person is anything but satisfactory. If the right hon. Gentleman will, however, reconsider these words, there is an end of the matter.

Sir JOHN SWINBURNE: I must say, with all due respect to the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary, that he is mistaken in regard to the duties of an agent. The managers of the mines in Staffordshire have met on several occasions, and urged, in the strongest possible manner, that agents are practically superior managers. The managers think it very hard indeed that these men should be placed over them, to give them directions when they are not compelled to hold certificates, as the managers themselves are. There is no evil so strongly felt in Staffordshire as this. I must urge on the Committee, supported as I am by practical men, the necessity of agents who, in Staffordshire at all events, manage mines holding first-class certificates.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): The right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary says—and says very truly—that the owner of a mine may be a person perfectly incompetent to judge of the management of the mine. He says that the owner may be a child, a woman, or a baronet; but the agent takes the place of the owner. If the right hon. Gentleman turns to Clause 21, which has been so frequently quoted, he will see that the agent may appoint himself to be manager of the mine. If he does appoint himself to be manager of the mine, then, of course, it will be necessary for him to qualify by taking out a first-class certificate. But a man may appoint himself not merely to one mine, but to any number of mines. He may be the nominal general manager of a large number of mines; and in regard to each particular pit, he may have under him a second-class certificated manager. That is perfectly admissible under the Bill. Now, what is of great public importance—and of importance to all those who work in each of these pits—is that the agent, who has, at any rate, to a certain extent, control over the second-class manager and the first-class manager, should himself be in a position to judge of the work, and of the completeness and character of the management of each of the pits under him, and the only guarantee that you can have that the agent shall be properly qualified to judge of the management of a manager, whether he be first or second class, in any colliery or pit is that he shall be himself a certificated man of the first class. Therefore, as a matter of public policy, to say nothing of the question of promotion, it does appear to me to be reasonable that these men who are over certificated managers should themselves necessarily be holders of first-class certificates.

MR. JOICEY (Durham, Chester-le-Street): It think it would be unwise to limit the agency to a man who holds a first-class certificate. It is necessary at times to have a man as agent who possesses a complete knowledge of the whole of the working of a mine. A man may have a first-class knowledge of mining, and yet not hold a first-class certificate. I believe there is a good deal of work independent of the actual working of a mine for an agent to do. I am one of the largest proprietors in the North of England; and I think that, as a rule, you will find the agent is a first-class certificated man, and that it is only where you get an exceptionally clever commercial man that he would be appointed agent. I think that, under such circumstances, it would be very unwise to prohibit owners from appointing any but first-class certificated men.

MR. BURT: I think the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary will meet the case, and therefore I recommend my hon. Friends to accept it.

SIR JOHN SWINBURNE: I understand that on Report the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary is prepared to alter the clause, so that it will provide that an agent who has the care and direction of a mine shall hold a first-class certificate. If that is the understanding, I beg leave to withdraw the Amendment.

MR. MATTHEWS: I suggest that the clause should read—

> "'Agent,' when used in relation to any mine, means any person appointed by the owner as his representative in respect to a mine or any part thereof, and superior to the manager appointed in pursuance of this Act."

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: If that is proposed, what is the use of such a definition? You do not require such a definition—it is pure surplusage.

MR. W. ABRAHAM: If the agent is to be superior to the manager, what is he to be superior to him in regard to if not for the purpose of this Act? If the agent is superior to the manager for the purpose of this Act, then all the other words may be dispensed with. I think it should be made clear that an agent is not to have control of the mine unless he is duly qualified.

MR. MATTHEWS: He will not have control of the mine any more than the owner. The agent will have the power of the owner, neither more nor less.

MR. W. ABRAHAM: In what way will he be superior to the manager?

MR. MATTHEWS: Just as the owner is, neither more nor less.

MR. W. ABRAHAM: In the direction or management of the mine, or in a commercial sense?

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES: Could not the words "representative of the owner" be omitted?

MR. MATTHEWS: I will adopt the words suggested to me by the Chairman himself—namely, "as such representative superior to the manager." I have always understood the agent to be the *alter ego* of the owner, as a man who has all the privileges of the owner, and no more.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I beg to move the omission of the entire definition—namely—

"'Agent,' when used in relation to any mine, means any person having, on behalf of the owner, care or direction of any mine or any part thereof, and superior to a manager appointed in pursuance of this Act."

I propose to do away with what appears to be a perfect absurdity in defining the word "agent." "Agent" is perfectly well known to the law. It means a person acting on behalf of the owner in respect to what this Act deals with. What on earth do we want to define the word "agent" for under these circumstances? By introducing needless definitions we run the risk of having fine points raised which need never be raised at all if you were content to leave the thing as it is.

Amendment proposed, in page 43, line 32, to leave out from the word "agent" to the word "Act," in line 35, both inclusive.—(*Mr. Arthur O'Connor.*)

Question put, "That the words 'agent when used in relation to any mine, means any person,' stand part of the Clause."

The Committee *divided:*—Ayes 180; Noes 54: Majority 126.—(Div. List, No. 396.) [4.25 P.M.]

Amendment proposed,

In page 43, line 33, leave out "having on behalf of the owner care or direction," and insert "appointed as the representative of the owner in respect."—(*Mr. Secretary Matthews.*)

Question, "That the words 'having on behalf of the owner care or direction' stand part of the Clause," put, and *negatived.*

Question, "That the words 'appointed as the representative of the owner in respect' be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

Amendment proposed, in page 43, line 34, after "and," insert "as such."—(*Mr. Secretary Matthews.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'as such' be there inserted."

MR. CONYBEARE: I am entirely in the dark as to what is to come after this. I should like to know how the matter really stands. If I am permitted, I will propose to make it clear that the agent should not directly interfere with the management of the mine.

THE CHAIRMAN: I will read how the clause will run when amended—

"'Agent,' when used in relation to any mine, means any person appointed as representative of the owner in respect of any mine or any part thereof, and as such superior to the manager appointed in pursuance of this Act."

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Amendment proposed, in page 43, line 40, leave out the word "sixteen," and insert the word "eighteen."—(*Mr. Pickard.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'sixteen' stand part of the Clause."

MR. MATTHEWS: I think we exhausted this subject many weeks ago. Sixteen is the age of a boy we decided, and I trust this Amendment will not be pressed, and that the Committee will be allowed to get on with Business.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 76 (Application of Act to Scotland).

Amendment proposed,

In page 44, line 10, leave out the words "the Queen's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer," and to insert the words "the auditor of the Sheriff Court of the county, or district of a county in which any inquiry takes place."—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'the Queen's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer' stand part of the Clause."

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I understand this Amendment is moved to meet the object with which I moved two Amendments earlier in the discussion on the Bill, and which I withdrew on the suggestion of the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald). I must take it upon his authority that this Amendment adequately meets the object in view.

Question put, and *negatived.*

Question, "That the words 'the auditor of the Sheriff Court of the county or district of a county in which any inquiry takes place,' be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: Before this clause is agreed to I should like to ask why the term "public elementary school" needs to be defined at all in line 21?

MR. F. S. POWELL (Wigan): I think that this definition appears in all Statutes.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: There is nothing about public elementary schools in the Bill.

MR. MATTHEWS: Yes.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: Where?

Clause, *agreed to.*

Clause 77 (Application of Act to Ireland) *agreed to.*

Transitory Provisions and Repeal.

Clause 78 (Existing inspectors and examining boards continued); and Clause 79 (Existing certificates and register continued), *agreed to.*

Clause 80 (Grant of certificates of service in case of certain under managers).

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause stand part of the Bill."

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): Mr. Courtney, I cannot help thinking that this clause will do serious injury to a great body of men who have by great diligence and often by self-sacrifice qualified themselves for the posts which are supposed to be secured by certificates of competency. I do not want to prejudice the case of the men I refer to by quoting the case entirely in my own words, because they seem to have expressed it much better than I can do myself. In a letter, the men to whom I refer clearly set forth the object I have in view. The Colliery Managers Association of Lancashire say, and their arguments are equally valid in regard to colliery managers in other parts of the country, that Clause 80 effects the position of what they are pleased to call their profession. They submit that if it becomes law, and a certificate of service is granted to every person who satisfies the Secretary of State he has been exercising daily supervision for 12 months previous to the passing of this Act, it will be the means of causing hundreds of certificates to be granted. In fact, every under manager will be entitled to it, and they say it will materially affect the future welfare of those men who have worked hard and successfully to obtain certificates of competency as required by the Act of 1872. You will take from these gentlemen many of the chances of promotion which are now open to them—many of these men have worked themselves up from lads in the pit at considerable expense, while others have served long periods of apprenticeship to become competent colliery managers. It is asserted, I believe by the right hon. Gentleman himself, that there would be difficulty with regard to the appointment of managers if it was always necessary to insist upon an examination on certificate—that is to say, a certificate of competency with examination; but these gentlemen declare that there have been over 6,000 certificates granted, and I believe I am within the number when I say that of these 2,500 are first-class certificates. Having regard to the fact that there are 3,500 collieries in the country, and that a very large number of the mines and pits are very small—I do not know how many hundreds have less than 30 men under ground who do not require certificated managers at all, and of those who have more than 30 men under ground a very large number of them are comparatively small—it is clear you do not want anything like 2,500 first-class certificates to furnish the managerial staff necessary to conduct the coal mines of the Kingdom. My informant goes on to say that if second-class certificates are granted it will be lawful for a person holding a first-class certificate to nominate himself for 20 mines or collieries, and to appoint a second-class man in each pit. These collieries may be miles apart, and not visited by the so-called manager more than once a month. In these cases, and there are many such, the whole management will devolve upon the second-class man, to whom it is comtemplated to grant the necessary certificate for no other qualification than that of 12 months' service. I think the arguments embodied in the statements I have submitted to the Committee are well worthy of the consideration of the Government and of the Committee. I do not think it is necessary I should say anything further, but certainly I shall feel myself compelled to vote against this clause.

MR. MATTHEWS: Allow me to say a very few words in reply to the hon. Gentleman. I quite admit that the second-class certificated managers would be subjected to great hardship if they were not enabled to continue the functions they are performing now. The same difficulty occurs under the Act of 1872 with regard to first-class certificates. If hon Members will turn to Section 31 they will find certificates of service were made as effective as certificates given in pursuance of examinatien for those who had a certain service. We propose a similar clause for the under managers.

I am sure hon. Members will see the justice of the clause.

Mr. ATHERLEY-JONES (Durham, N.W.): I quite agree with what has fallen from the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary. There is only one matter I desire to refer to, upon which I hope the right hon. Gentleman will be able to satisfy us. It is just possible that the clause will operate very harshly upon a number of deserving persons. It may happen under this Act that owners of mines may appoint persons as managers of mines who are permitted under the section of the Act which allows of non-certificated managers being appointed where there are only a small number of persons employed. Under the last Act where only a certain number of persons are employed it is not necessary the managers should hold a certificate at all.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: This is a very important point. There was a similar provision in the Act of 1872, and for years after that Act passed men were appointed and qualified in this way—evasively I think—on the strength of having been employed in charge of collieries during a certain period before the Act was passed. It was a pure evasion of the Act, and it should be borne in mind that many of these men are now in possession of first-class certificates.

Mr. MATTHEWS: No, no. This is entirely confined to second-class certificates. I will, however, reconsider the point by Report. I think that a little alteration may well be made in the section.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: What I say is that of the men who were appointed under the Act of 1872 on service certificates, many are not now classed under the Bill as first class.

Mr. MATTHEWS: They have been so for years past.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Clauses 81, 82, and 83, inclusive, severally *agreed to.*

Mr. S. WILLIAMSON (Kilmarnock, &c.): I rise to propose the Amendment standing in my name entirely on humanitarian grounds. I would never have drawn up this Amendment with reference to ordinary industries of the country; but the case of the miners is one, in my opinion, which calls for special consideration. Let us look at the position of these men. They work under ground; they cannot get out without the permission of the owners; they are working in narrow workings, and in mines some of which are wet and others partially wet; they carry on their labour in a cramped position; they have to get up at 5 o'clock in the morning, and they do not get out of the mine until 4 o'clock in the afternoon; and during six months of the year they never see the sun except on Sunday. I think it is monstrous to keep these men below ground for more than eight hours consecutively. I feel sure that this Amendment will commend itself to the feelings of the House on humanitarian grounds, and it is, as I have said, solely on those grounds that I propose it. You say, why do the men not combine, as the English miners do? But the workmen in Scotland are not so perfect in their organization as those in England, and that is easily accounted for, because in England you have large bodies of men associated together, whereas in Scotland you have comparatively few men scattered over large districts, and it is for these reasons that the men do not combine. Some years ago the Scotch miners struck against the long hours during which they have to work; but, after eight weeks, they were starved into submission; they were obliged to give way because they could not help themselves. There are several mines in my district the owners of which do not allow the men to come up before 4 o'clock, notwithstanding that they have to get up at 5 o'clock in the morning, and work under the conditions which I have described. I think this is a most barbarous practice, and I sincerely trust that the clause which I propose will meet with the sympathy of hon. Members.

New Clause, after Clause 11—

(Employment of workmen.)

"No workman shall be employed below ground in any mine to which this Act applies (except in cases of emergency) for a longer period than eight consecutive hours, or for more than eight hours in any twenty-four hours, when the mine is worked on the single shift system. The period of such employment shall be deemed to begin at the time of leaving the surface and to end at the time of returning to the surface,"—(*Mr. S. Williamson,*)

—*brought up*, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be read a second time."

MR. HOZIER (Lanarkshire, S.): I rise to support the Amendment introduced by the hon. Member for Kilmarnock (Mr. S. Williamson). I fully recognize that the House has, as a rule, always objected to curtailing adult labour; but I cannot help thinking that circumstances alter cases, and I would ask the Committee to consider the circumstances and the nature of the work which the miners have to perform. I suppose there are few people who receive greater sympathy for their labour than Members of Parliament. Let us consider the time during which a Member of Parliament has to work. If he is engaged on a Committee he comes down at 12 o'clock, and afterwards attends in the House of Commons from 4 o'clock in the afternoon probably until 4 o'clock the next morning. This makes 16 hours' work, and we are told in consequence by the *Lancet* and other newspapers which are full of our sufferings, that we are more or less dying for our country. But will anyone contend that our 16 hours of work can be for a moment compared with even 8 hours' work in the mines? It is the miner, I say, who is being worn out by excessive hours of labour, and for that reason I beg to support the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Kilmarnock.

MR. HALDANE (Haddington): The new clause, the second reading of which has been moved by my hon. Friend the Member for Kilmarnock (Mr. S. Williamson) proposes to do two things—it proposes to restrict the hours during which a man may be employed consecutively below ground; and, in the second place, it proposes to put it in the power of a man so employed to compel the owner or manager of the mine to give him egress at any time. I wish to remark that these two propositions stand on a completely different footing. We have hitherto sought in this Bill to do two distinct things. We have sought to protect the workman and employer against fraudulent dealings, and we have sought to deal with a mine as a dangerous place, and to provide in accordance with principle and precedent that the business of mines shall be so conducted that it shall be free from certain dangers and perils. The second of the propositions of the hon. Member appears to me to fall within the latter of these categories, and to be a most proper and beneficial one. But in the first part of this clause we appear to approach an entirely new principle; we are not dealing with women and children; we are dealing with able-bodied men, and what my hon. Friend asks is to protect these men, who are perfectly able to protect themselves, from the consequences of their own contract. Now, my hon. Friend adverted to some of the circumstances in which they are placed. I entirely and absolutely agree with him in thinking that it is a monstrous thing that the men should work in the mine underground for more than eight hours. I think it would be of advantage to the country if we could have the system in Scotland, which works so well, in the North of England—that is to say, the system of two shifts of six and a-half or seven hours. But are you to call for the intervention of the State to get this good system introduced into Scotland? [An hon. MEMBER: Yes.] Ought it not to be the result of the exertions of the men themselves? [An hon. MEMBER: No.] My hon. Friend says "No." But I say "Yes." We are here dealing with the gravest issues, and if the words which my hon. Friend proposes were inserted they would land us in a condition of things of which at the present time we have no conception. I admit that this is one of the most tempting cases that can be brought before us; but if we are to answer this question affirmatively we shall be introducing an entirely new principle, and one which is impossible, logically, to defend in its application to cases which are not now before us, and, which I take it, many hon. Members are not anxious to go into. We have had this question brought forward in connection with the hours of shopmen and in connection with the hours of agricultural labourers. I think the case of the miners is a far harder and more urgent case than these. But let us see how the matter now stands. By organization the miners in the North of England have been able to restrict their hours in the same way as is proposed by the clause of my hon. Friend. They have been enabled in the East of Scotland to keep their hours within the eight hours' limit. Why not, then, in the West of Scotland? Surely it is because there is not sufficient organization among the men, and because they have not adequately combined together in order to get what, I think, the great majority of Members of this House would agree that they ought to have. It may be that we shall hereafter be driven to recognize that it is the duty of the State to interfere to a greater degree in the interest of the subject than at present; but in the meantime let us rely on the exertions of individuals in combination; let us remember that they are in the possession and exercise of their faculties, and that they should unrestrictedly and to the fullest degree put forth the intelligence which belongs to them for the purpose they have in view. While I deeply sympathize with my hon. Friend's object, I feel that I am face to face with a question of principle, and, moreover, with a very grave question of principle. I know that in the vote I shall give I shall be going in the teeth of the wishes of a large number of my own constituents; but I believe that there is no other course open to me than the one which I propose to take in opposing this Motion.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I would at this hour make an earnest appeal to hon. Members to restrict the discussion of this Amendment, and to decide at once the question which is before the Committee. I am not in the least seeking to depreciate the importance of this question; but I think that it has been so often brought forward that nothing can be added to what has already been said that is likely to alter the opinion which this House has arrived at. The hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Haddington (Mr. Haldane) very ably stated the view which is held on this side of the House with regard to the question before it, and surely it is not necessary at this stage to discuss the question at greater length. I do not want to enter into controversial matter; all I wish to say is, that every hon. Member of this House has thoroughly made himself acquainted with the labour which the miner has to perform, and I do trust that if hon. Gentlemen opposite think it necessary to divide the Committee on this clause, they will do so at once.

MR. BURT (Morpeth): I quite appreciate the appeal of the right hon. Gentleman, and the indication he has given us with regard to the pressure of time. I join in that appeal, although it may seem a little inconsistent in asking to be allowed to say one word on this subject before we go to the Division. I have been all my life an advocate of short hours of labour; I have advocated that principle constantly in this House and out of it, and at this moment I am still in favour of shortening the hours during which the miners work. I have, however, always drawn a distinction between adult male labour and juvenile and female labour. In those particular cases I quite endorse the view of my hon. Friend who has moved this Amendment, and I think he is quite right in bringing this subject before the House. There is evidence of a general desire on the part of the Scotch miners to have such a clause as this inserted in the Bill, and for my part, if we had been dealing with Scotland only, I would have had no hesitation in supporting the Amendment before the Committee. But I want to point out, that so far as adults are concerned they can do for themselves what is here asked to be done for them. It has been done in England, where it is true they have a better organization, and it has also been done in Scotland. It is only in that part of Scotland where the men have not a thorough organization that these long hours are maintained, and when they have become more thoroughly organized in that part I believe they will be able to establish the eight hours' system throughout the length and breadth of Scotland. In the North of England the miners at present work six and a-half and seven hours a-day, but this Amendment would imply that everyone should work at least eight hours a-day. I recognize that under existing circumstances there is a strong feeling against continuing the discussion on the Amendment of the hon. Member. I should be very much disinclined to vote against him, but I feel I cannot vote with him, and I shall therefore do what I have seldom done since I became a Member of this House—that is to say, I shall remain neutral on this question.

MR. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.): I have no wish whatever to prolong the discussion, but I am bound to inform the Committee that last year I was engaged for some months on this question of coal mines regulation, and I received a large deputation from miners in all parts of the country. This deputation brought before me a number of proposals among which compulsory limitation of hours of labour was not included. But to make sure, I put this question to them—"Do you wish any State interference with the hours of adult labour?" The emphatic answer I received was, "No." The deputation which waited upon me was a most important one, and knowing that this was a burning question, I put the case before them as I have stated to the Committee, and I obtained the answer, that in no district in Great Britain was it the desire of the miners that any restriction of the hours of labour in the case of adult males should be imposed by law. I am strongly in favour of such combination among miners as will obtain for them lower hours of labour. In my humble judgment, eight hours is quite enough, and perhaps more than enough, for them to work, but it is certain that last year it was the wish of the miners that this should not be established by law.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): The right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) says in effect—"We will not help you; you must help yourselves." With regard to the deputation to which he has referred, I am aware that he did elicit the answer stated to the Committee; but it is equally true that the miners in different parts of the country, when the reports of that interview were published, emphatically protested against the answer given to the right hon. Gentleman on this subject. This is not so much a question of organization as is supposed by some; there seems to be a great misapprehension on this point. The hon. Gentleman near me is of opinion that it is to their organization that the miners in Northumberland are indebted for the limitation of their hours of labour. Although, like the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh, I am not a miner, I venture to dissent from the view which the hon. Member has taken. I believe that the limitation of the hours of labour in Durham and Northumberland is due to a totally different cause; it is due to the fact that some of the employers in that district adopted the system of double shifts, and that others finding it to their interest to have the double shift fell in with the arrangement. I believe even now if the employers were to take it into their heads that it was to their advantage to depart from the system which at present obtains and prescribe more than eight hours of labour, the miners in the end would have to submit, notwithstanding their organization. Some time ago the miners in Northumberland challenged their employers; and what was the result? The result was complete collapse.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): The hon. Member for East Donegal ought to add that the leading members of the organization tried to prevent the strike.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR; Yes; but I say that the organization as a whole was in favour of the strike. The strike collapsed. The miners of Durham and Northumberland would not face a collision with their employers, and on this question of hours, also, their resistance would collapse if the owners made up their minds to change the present system. The miners in Scotland are twitted because they are not organized as they are in England. It is perfectly true that in some parts of Scotland the eight-hours' system obtains, whereas, in other parts, it does not. You have the eight-hours' system in Fifeshire; but you have not got it in Lanarkshire and the West of Scotland. As I have said, this does not depend upon organization. The fact is, that in the East of Scotland the mines and collieries are generally owned by comparatively small men, who are more amenable to the pressure brought to bear upon them by the miners than the larger owners in the West of Scotland. In the West of Scotland you are in the presence of large firms, who have no bowels of compassion; they make the hardest possible terms with their *employés*. This is the reason why you find that the men in the West of Scotland have to submit to harder terms than those in the East. [*Cries of* "Divide!"] Hon. Gentlemen opposite may grudge a few minutes of the time of the House; but, surely, if we had to stop here for a week to settle this question, it would not be too much, when we consider that the time of 600 men is concerned on one side and that on the other there is the interest of 400,000 miners. What is the time of the House of Commons to the lives of these men? I can tell the hon. Gentleman the Member for Morpeth (Mr. Burt) that there is in his own constituency a colliery in which the men are compelled to work for nine hours, and he will find that the overwhelming majority of his constituents are in favour of this eight-hours' Amendment, and that he will have to vote for it, if he remains in his present position, at some future day. This is a matter of considerable importance, not only with regard to the miners in Scotland, but also with regard to those in Durham and Northumberland, and we want to secure for the miners in the West of Scotland the term which has already been secured by the workmen in the East.

Mr. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.W.): This is a question of supreme importance to the miners in the West of Scotland, and as I have never wasted any time in this House I ask for the indulgence of the Committee while I make a few observations on the clause of the hon. Member for Kilmarnock (Mr. S. Williamson). So great is the interest we take in this question, that I can assure hon. Members that we should consider the Bill almost as so much waste paper, unless we have in it a clause restricting the hours of labour under ground to eight. I say that our men do not care a farthing if the other clauses of the Bill were thrown out; but they are most anxious that this particular clause should be passed. I challenge any hon. Member for Scotland to bring forward any section of miners who will condemn my action in speaking thus, or condemn the action of the hon. Member for Kilmarnock in bringing forward this Amendment. It has been said that we take merely an academical interest in this question, and that we are not practical miners. But I suppose that we are not deprived of common sense; and although the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) has told us that the deputation that waited on him were not in favour of State interference with the hours of labour in mines, I can assure him that he might stump Scotland from the Tweed to John O'Groats' House, or from the Bass Rock to Ailsa, he would not find a single miner to support the statement made to him by the deputation. I am glad there are no mining Representatives from Scotland in the House at this moment, and my reason is that if there were they would be compelled in lengthy and forcible speeches to vindicate their position with regard to this Amendment, in reply to the statement of the right hon. Gentleman. I venture to appeal to the right hon. Gentleman, and to ask him if he thinks he is really serving the interest of the working classes of the country by not standing firm on this question? It is said that the Scotch miners are to organize as they have done in Durham and Northumberland; but are our men to be pushed day by day to starvation while this organization is growing up? The miners in Scotland know their trade interest, and they know that if they do not have State interference in this matter this winter will reduce them to starvation. I say there is a pinch coming in the mining industry, and that it cannot go on in the future as it has done in the past. The whole of this Bill is conceived in terms that imply that the mining interest is flourishing. But prices are falling, and much suffering will be thrown on the workmen in consequence; and if the Government do not take measures to meet this they will find themselves face to face with a similar state of things to that which occurred at Blantyre a little time ago, where men saw themselves, owing to the pressure of these economical laws—this freedom of contract—gradually being brought into a state of starvation. You talk of freedom of contract, and say that we are not to interfere with adult labour; but how otherwise are we to interfere between the rich and poor man? Your freedom of contract is all on one side. I know that the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) will advise the House not to commit itself to Socialistic legislation; but what has been the legislation of the last 10 years, if not Socialistic in its tendency? If all the miners had the same mental power as the hon. Member for Northampton, I should be the last to ask for State interference; but these men stand in a vastly different position, and I say that it is not in their interest alone, but in that of employers, that this eight hours' rule should become law. Is it not obvious that the men will do a better day's work under the eight hours' system than under a 12 hours' system? The proposal we make is a moderate one, and it is one which must be carried sooner or later. The country is rapidly making up its mind, and the House and the Government will find that every trade in the Kingdon will before long ask for an eight hours' Bill. With regard to the Amendment before the Committee, I hope my hon. Friend will press it to a Division, even if he only gets one Member, and that would be myself, to tell with him.

MR. S. WILLIAMSON: I wish to say that I shall be obliged to divide the Committee on my Amendment, not because of the irrelevant matter which has been introduced into the discussion, but on humanitarian grounds, on which alone I appeal to the Committee.

MR. BROADHURST (Nottingham, W.): It is exceedingly difficult on this very important question either to give a silent vote, or to abstain from voting. The hon. Member for North-West Lanark (Mr. Cunninghame Graham) has referred to the statement of my right hon. Friend the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers); but the Committee will remember that on the occasion referred to the Scotch miners were fully represented, and formed no inconsiderable part of the deputation which waited upon my right hon. Friend. With regard to the main question, the hon. Member for Morth-West Lanark speaks as if it were a universal demand on the part of the workmen that the State should step in and make this eights hours' regulation. I defy the hon. Gentleman, however, to refer to a properly constituted representative of a workmen's organization who has voted for this rule.

MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM: I challenge the hon. Gentleman to ask in any public meeting if the workmen are in favour of the Bill without the clause.

MR. BROADHURST: That is not the question. Many trades in this country have provided themselves with the eight hours' rule, and I am myself in favour of it where it can be obtained. But the question here is whether the State is to be called upon to do for the miners what they are perfectly able to do for themselves. If we ask the State to regulate the hours of labour for adults, we shall afterwards have to ask for State interference in the matter of wages, and then we may have to ask the State to intervene to settle how wages are to be expended. To support this proposal would be to condemn the whole system of trades unionism, which is one of the great triumphs won by labour in this country. For these reasons I shall certainly not vote for the Amendment of the hon. Member for Kilmarnock.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I consider it my duty to enter a protest against what has been stated by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) and others as to there being no demand on the part of the Scotch miners for an eight hours' rule. I do not deny what the right hon. Gentleman has said with regard to the reply made by the deputation which waited on him last year; but I have, within the last few weeks, addressed some half-dozen meetings of miners in Ayrshire and Stirlingshire; and having discoursed with some thousands of these men, I am able to state that at the present moment the miners of Scotland are for this measure, and, further, that they are exceedingly emphatic in demanding it. I challenge the hon. Member for Ayrshire (Mr. H. Elliot) to get up and say that his constituents will not at once turn him out of his representation if he fails to do his duty in voting for this clause. I am a strong trade unionist. There are many trade unionists among the miners of my Division; but if they tell me that they are not in favour of this clause, my own experience is very much at fault. There is, I must say, a gross misconception with regard to this very important question, and we are bound to deal with it fairly. The State is simply the representative of the people of the country; and if the men of Great Britain and Scotland desire to do—through the agency of Parliament—that which they are unable to do through their trade unions, I say they are quite as much justified in asking their Representatives in this House to introduce this rule as they would be to endeavour to establish it through their trade unions. But this Amendment is not alone in favour of the men; it is in favour of the owners also. I believe there are some owners' Representatives to be heard, who will, in this case, say that their interest is identical with that of the men. At any rate, there are owners who wish to deal fairly with their men, and are in favour of this measure, although they cannot deal out this measure of justice, because there are other owners who are interested in the men working 10 hours a-day. We have to consider whether this is a principle tending to the social and moral development of our people, and if it be, it is a principle which should be introduced in the interests of the country at large; and when we are met with pedantic and academic arguments about the good of the State, I say that they are arguments which can, in the present case, be dispensed with. These are the few remarks I have to make; and I will add my testimony to this discussion that the workmen and miners in Scotland are in favour of this Amendment.

MR. MASON (Lanark, Mid): I rise to support the clause which has been moved by the hon. Member for Kilmarnock (Mr. S. Williamson); and, in doing so, I wish to contradict the statement that there is no desire in Scotland for this eight hours' regulation. I can assure the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) that he is entirely misinformed on this subject, and of this the Petition presented yesterday to the House is evidence. [*Cries of* "Divide!"] I shall conclude what I have to say on this subject, notwithstanding the cries of hon. Gentlemen opposite. I say that the Scotch miners are largely in favour of the eight hours' system. I am surprised that it should be argued that the men ought to be able to get this for themselves. No doubt, it is a fundamental principle that what people can do for themselves we should not do for them; but in this case the miners cannot get what they want. The evidence is that they cannot get mining regulations carried out without the aid of an Act of Parliament. If this regulation works without any injurious effect in one part of the country, why do you not agree to establish it in Scotland, when the miners ask for it? I do not at all agree that the question should be argued from the point of view of combination. I am satisfied that eight hours is quite long enough for any man to work under ground; and I dare say that if, instead of being Members of Parliament, Gentlemen in this House were miners, they would every one of them be in favour of the present clause. From an economical point of view, I believe the application of this principle would be beneficial to the nation. It has been found to be of use where it has been put in force; and I call on the Committee to assist those who are unable to assist themselves in the matter of establishing the rule where it does not exist now. This clause will in no way interfere with over ground work; and, for my part, I think we may draw a very important distinction between the two kinds of labour. For these reasons, I shall support the Motion for the second reading of the clause.

MR. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck): My objection to this Amendment is not on the ground that I think the Scotch miners are not anxious to have the clause, but because its tendency is in the direction of increasing the hours of work for a number of miners whom I represent in this House, and who solely, by their organization and self-dependence, have been able to secure a shorter period of labour. The hon. Member for East Donegal (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) said that it was because we had the double-shift system in Northumberland that we have been able to shorten the hours of work; but I can assure my hon. Friend that even under that system we worked at one time a greater number of hours than we do now. It is in my recollection that the miners in Durham worked for 10 and 11 hours a-day, and it is by their organization, and not owing to any Act of Parliament, that they have been able to get those hours reduced. It is because I believe that, with double shift in operation, the owners may find it open to them to extend the hours of labour, that I am opposed to the Amendment. If the hon. Member chooses to bring in a Bill for Scotland, to enforce the eight-hours' system, I shall support it, because I believe that the Scotch miners strongly desire to have that system. I do not want to vote against the miners of Scotland; but for once since I have been a Member of this House I shall walk out when the Question is put from the Chair.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): It is impossible for me to give a silent vote on this question after the discussion which has taken place. I intend to vote against this Amendment, as a protest against those who encourage men to rely on Parliament to do for them what they ought to do for themselves.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I venture to appeal to the hon. Member for Kilmarnock to withdraw his Amendment, and that appeal I make in the interest of the Bill itself. The hon. Member for Northampton has made a suggestion which, I think, those who support this Amendment would do well to consider. But there is another appeal which I wish to make. Hon. Gentlemen have clauses on the Paper for consideration in Committee, and I suggest that those clauses should be considered as the first question on the Report of the Bill. If those clauses still remain on the Paper for consideration in Committee the Bill will be placed in such a position that it is impossible to say what would be the result. I hope hon. Gentlemen will agree to the course I have suggested.

MR. S. WILLIAMSON: It will be quite impossible for me to comply with the request of the right hon. Gentleman with regard to the present Amendment.

Question put.

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 54; Noes 159: Majority 105.—(Div. List, No. 397.) [5.40 P.M.]

And it being a quarter of an hour before Six of the clock, the Chairman left the Chair to report Progress; Committee to sit again *To-morrow*.

QUESTIONS.

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ORDER OF BUSINESS.

MR. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.): I beg to ask the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury, What will be the Business of the House to-morrow?

SIR JOSEPH PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): I observe that the Coal Mines Bill has been set down for to-morrow, and I wish to ask whether the Government intend to take it then or not? [*Cries of* "From day to day."]

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): I can only say what the order of Business will be to-morrow. The first Order will be the consideration of the Lords' Amendments to the Irish Land Bill; the second will be the Coal Mines Bill; and the third Order will be the Truck Bill.

MR. CHILDERS: What time will the Allotments Bill be taken on Friday? I understand that a promise has been made to take it on Friday.

MR. JACKSON: I cannot answer that.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I was not aware there was any definite promise to take the Allotments Bill on Friday night. I think it was only said that it was likely to be taken; but the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) has promised to make a statement with regard to Public Business to-morrow.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.) I wish to ask, when the Irish Estimates will be taken?

MR. JACKSON: The hon. Member will hear of that to-morrow.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I beg to ask, whether it is not the fact that the Government undertook that the Coal Mines Bill should be the first Order from day to day until it was disposed of?

MR. JACKSON: Her Majesty's Government anticipated that the Coal Mines Bill would not take more than two nights, and they were much disappointed that it was not finished on Tuesday. As three days have been occupied by the Bill I think the Government have done everything that was incumbent on them and in their power.

MR. CHILDERS: The right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury has suggested that hon. Members shall allow the Committee to be finished as soon as possible and bring forward their Amendments on the Report, and no answer has as yet been made to that suggestion. I hope I am not doing wrong in expressing the hope that hon. Members on this side of the House will take the advice of the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury.

House adjourned at one minute before Six o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, 18*th August*, 1887.

Their Lordships met;—and having gone through the Business on the Paper without debate,

House adjourned at half past Four o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 18*th August*, 1887.

MINUTES.]—Public Bills—*Ordered — First Reading*—Merchant Seamen's Widows and Orphans' Pension * [382].

Considered as amended—Post Office Savings Banks and Government Annuities [344], *debate adjourned.*

Withdrawn—Royal Irish Constabulary (Officers) * [223].

QUESTIONS.

NATIONAL EDUCATION (IRELAND) —NATIONAL SCHOOL, ROUGHFORT, CO. ANTRIM.

Mr. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Is it a fact that a farmer, named Robert Barron, has carted across the playground of the National School at Roughfort, Country Antrim; whether the Commissioners of Education will endeavour to have the rights of the Board protected; and, what is the record, as regarding efficiency and general conduct, of the schoolmistress, Miss Gourley?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said, the Commissioners of National Education informed him that the national school alluded to was a non-vested one. They had, therefore, no control over the building or the premises. The school was well conducted, and the Inspector reported that the general efficiency of the classes was very fair.

IRELAND—ST. PATRICK'S PUBLIC LIBRARY, DUBLIN (MARSH'S LIBRARY)—THE OFFICE OF LIBRARIAN.

Mr. DWYER GRAY (Dublin, St. Stephen's Green) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether a vacancy at present exists in the office of Librarian of St. Patrick's Public Library, Dublin, commonly known as Marsh's Library; whether the will of the founder, Archbishop Marsh, contains the following provision:—

> "That the Governors shall at all times elect the most able and eminent person they can hear of, or find either in Great Britain or Ireland or any foreign part;"

and, whether the Governors have advertized the vacancy in order to comply with the terms of the founder's will?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: I have not yet been able to get a full answer to this Question, owing, I presume, to the absence of some of the Trustees. The telegram which I have received says that the office of Librarian of St. Patrick's Public Library is at present vacant. There is no such provision in the will of the founder, Archbishop Marsh, as is alleged in the Question. I will make further inquiry into the matter.

INLAND REVENUE—THE INHABITED HOUSE DUTY—INDUSTRIAL DWELLINGS.

Mr. HOBHOUSE (Somerset, E.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, If he is aware that in blocks of improved industrial dwellings, wherever two or more single room tenements are let together, the Commissioners of Inland Revenue require the payment of Inhabited House Duty, although the aggregate annual value of the tenements let together is below the limit of £20; whether such a practice is in accordance with the concession explained by the Secretary to the Treasury or the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on the 29th February, 1884, in the House of Commons, that such blocks of industrial dwellings were to be exempt from Duty—

> "Provided only that the conditions were satisfied, that the block consisted of tenements each of which was under £20 value;"

and, whether, since the result of such a practice must be to discourage the proprietors of improved industrial dwellings from letting more than one room to poor families, he will consider how far the directions given by the Treasury to the Commissioners can be modified so that this result may be avoided?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): The exemption from House Duty which the Inland Revenue is empowered to give in the case of tenements forming part of improved industrial dwellings is limited by two conditions—namely, (1) that the tenements should be under £20 in value; (2) that they should be structurally separate from the rest of the buildings. In the exceptional cases referred to by the hon. Gentleman the second of these conditions does not exist, inasmuch as the two rooms, though each by itself structurally separate, are not, when occupied together, so separate. The condition with respect to structural separation is, I think, in strict accordance with the promises of my right hon. Friend the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) as Chancellor of the Exchequer, in the debate of February 29, 1884. At the same time, I am prepared to admit that the effect of the Rule about structural separation is, in the exceptional cases to which the hon. Gentleman's Question refers, somewhat anomalous; and I am prepared to consider whether that Rule cannot be modified in such a way as to meet these cases, and to provide for exemption from House Duty of all tenements under £20 in *bonâ fide* industrial dwellings.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES' ACTS—THE INDEPENDENT MUTUAL BRETHREN FRIENDLY SOCIETY.

MR. HANBURY (Preston) (for Mr. HUBBARD) (Bucks, N.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether it is the intention of the Government to take any further steps in connection with Mr. Sutton's Report on the affairs of the Independent Mutual Brethren Friendly Society, either by way of legal proceedings or by way of further legislation with regard to Friendly Societies?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): Mr. Sutton's Report, and other information which has been received since its publication, is now before the Director of Public Prosecutions, who is considering what action, if any, he should take on it. As regards the general question of the working of the Friendly Societies' Acts, I will give the subject my careful consideration during the Recess.

NEW GUINEA—ASSUMPTION OF SOVEREIGNTY.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether an opportunity will be given to Parliament of expressing an opinion before Her Majesty is advised to assume Sovereignty in New Guinea, and to hand the control over the administration of the portion of New Guinea thus appropriated to the Government of Queensland, subject to certain reservations?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir HENRY HOLLAND) (Hampstead): Her Majesty's Government have agreed that upon the passing of a Bill by the Queensland Legislature, the terms of which will be found at pages 209 and 210 of the Appendix to the Colonial Conference, Her Majesty will be advised to assume Sovereignty over the present Protectorate. It is believed that the Bill will shortly be passed, but the date is not known. It is considered important, in the interest of the Natives, that there should be no delay in declaring Sovereignty after the Bill has passed. Although no special day can be given for a discussion upon this subject, there are, as the hon. Member knows, opportunities upon which he can raise the question before Parliament rises. No formal sanction of Parliament is required before Sovereignty is proclaimed; but a Vote will have to be taken in due course of time for the steam vessel and its maintenance.

DEFENCES OF THE EMPIRE—JOINT NAVAL FORCE IN THE AUSTRALASIAN WATERS.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, with reference to the agreement for an additional joint Naval Force in Australasian waters, Whether the stipulation, that—

> "This agreement shall be considered to become actually binding between the Imperial

and the several Colonial Governments so soon as the Colonial Legislatures shall have passed special appropriations for the terms hereinafter mentioned,"

means that this country may be bound in this matter, without reference to or sanction of Parliament; whether, when after the agreement has become binding under the stipulation above quoted, and Parliament is asked to supply the necessary funds, it will be free to deal with the matter entirely at its discretion and without prejudice, on account of the agreement made and the expectations held out to the Colonial Governments; whether the stipulation—

"Notwithstanding the establishment of this joint Naval Force, no reduction is to take place in the normal strength of Her Majesty's Naval Force employed on the Australian Station,"

means that this country will be bound to maintain at its sole expense the Naval Force now stationed in Australasian waters, and will so far lose all power of moving or otherwise employing its own ships to meet the general necessities of the Empire; and what is the normal strength of Her Majesty's Naval Force employed on the Australian Station?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir HENRY HOLLAND) (Hampstead): It has been necessary to ascertain whether the Colonial Parliaments will make the proposed provision before taking further steps in this country. Her Majesty's Government will, of course, be bound to obtain Parliamentary sanction to the scheme, inasmuch as a Vote for the expenditure must be in due course submitted. After the very full public discussion and approval which the scheme of joint naval defence has received, it is clear that, although the House of Commons has the power of refusing to provide the contribution assigned to this country, the failure to do so would cause great surprise and dissatisfaction to the Colonies; and I must add that Her Majesty's Government are bound in good faith to uphold an arrangement which they consider of great importance. The stipulation as to not moving the vessels out of Australasian waters only applies to the new vessels; and the further stipulation relating to the maintenance of the existing strength of the normal Squadron was inserted for the purpose of insuring that the new vessels should be a *bonâ fide* addition to the strength of the Squadron, and that this addition should not be used as an argument for the reduction of the existing force. It appears from the *Navy List* that the present strength of Her Majesty's ships on the Station consists of the flag-ship, three corvettes, two gunboats, two schooners, and three surveying vessels.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL gave Notice that he would take an early opportunity of calling attention to the way in which these sanctions were made by Colonial Parliaments without the British Parliament having an opportunity of expressing an opinion upon the subject.

"ALLOTMENT" — EXPLANATION OF THE TERM.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) asked the President of the Local Government Board, if an explanation of the term "allotment" is anywhere to be found; or, if not, whether he can now explain it?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I was rather astonished that the hon. Member should ask me what the meaning of the word "allotment" is, as I find he voted for a Resolution last year proposed by the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham (Mr. Jesse Collings), which expressed regret that the Queen's Speech did not contain any intimation of the intention of Her Majesty's Government to deal with the question of allotments. I have too high an opinion of the hon. Gentleman to think that he would vote for anything which he did not understand. But if any further elucidation is wanted of the meaning of the word "allotment," I have no doubt the hon. Member will obtain all the information he requires by referring to any good edition of *Johnson's Dictionary*.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: I beg to explain that I come from Scotland, where the word is not known. Last year I took it on the faith of the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham. And now that there is an important Bill before the House, I hope the right hon. Gentleman will give some explanation of the nature of this word.

MR. RITCHIE: *Johnson's Dictionary.*

INLAND REVENUE — THE INCOME TAX—TERMINABLE ANNUITIES.

GENERAL SIR GEORGE BALFOUR (Kincardine) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Where information can be found, in the Finance Accounts or elsewhere, as to the amounts of the several classes of the Terminable Annuities subject to the Income Tax on capital and interest, and not subject thereto; also the annuities of the several classes held by the public, by the National Debt Commissioners, and by others; and, if the information is not available will he supply it?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): Income Tax is only payable in respect of Terminable Annuities held by the public, not in respect of Terminable Annuities in the hands of the National Debt Commissioners. The Annuities held by the public at March 31, 1887, comprise Life Annuities, Annuities for terms of years, and Exchequer or Tontine Annuities, and amount to £1,082,786. The several amounts are stated in the Finance Accounts for 1886-7 at page 44. Income Tax is also paid on £1,200,000 a-year of the Chancery Fund Annuity, stated at page 45 of the Finance Accounts, £1,200,000 a-year being the interest on the £40,000,000 cancelled in exchange for the Annuity, and being paid over for distribution among the persons to whom the stock belonged.

POST OFFICE (IRELAND) — POSTAL TELEGRAPH OFFICE, SMITHBOROUGH, CO. MONAGHAN.

MR. P. O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.) asked the Postmaster General, Whether he is yet prepared to state his decision on the Memorial of the inhabitants of Smithborough, County Monaghan, for the establishment of a postal telegraph office; whether an efficient service could be obtained by a connection with the wire at present working between Clones and Newbliss with an ordinary instrument and with a considerable saving in the cost of working; and, whether the circumstance would affect the amount of guarantee required by the Department?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): In reply to the hon. Member, I have to state that the further Report for which I called has now been received; and I regret to have to state that the decision communicated to the Memorialists in October, 1885—namely, that a guarantee of £30 a-year must be provided if a telegraph office were opened at Smithborough—still holds good. No saving whatever, but rather an increase of expense, would be caused if the office were served in the manner suggested by the hon. Member.

INDIA — THE RYOTS — SYSTEM OF AGRICULTURAL BANKS.

MR. S. SMITH (Flintshire) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether, looking to the indebted and depressed condition of the Indian Ryot, he can state if any steps are being taken to carry out the practical experiment proposed by the Government of India in their Despatch, No. 658 R of 8th December, 1882, with a view to introducing into India the system of agricultural banks, which have proved so useful in Germany and elsewhere in providing the peasantry with capital at moderate rates, and in protecting them from the exactions of small usurers; and, whether he will lay upon the Table of the House the Correspondence relating to this question?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JOHN GORST) (Chatham): The proposals made in the letter referred to by the hon. Member were carefully considered in 1882 by the Secretary of State in Council, with the result that it was determined that they were not capable of practical application. I shall be prepared to lay the Papers on the Table.

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1872—APPLICATION FOR BUILDING LOANS.

MR. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.) asked the Lord Advocate, Under what authority, by Minute or otherwise, the Scotch Education Department decline to give their consent to an application to the Public Works Loan Commissioners for a building loan under Clause 45 of the Education (Scotland) Act of 1872, except on condition that the proposed buildings can be constructed at a less cost than £10 per scholar: whether it is a fact that formerly the amount of space required by the Department was eight feet square per scholar, and that

that amount has recently been raised to 10 feet square; and, whether the same limit of building expenditure of £10 per scholar is still imposed on school boards, whilst the space to be provided for the scholars has been increased by 25 per cent?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): The rule of the Education Department to refuse its consent to an application to the Public Works Loan Commissioners where the cost of building, exclusive of the cost of the site, exceeds £10 per scholar, was established under Treasury authority, partly as a safeguard against excessive and unnecessary expenditure, and partly because the funds at the disposal of the Commissioners were not unlimited. This limitation applies only to cases of loans from the Public Works Commissioners, and not to cases where it is proposed to raise the loan in the open market. The accommodation in schools built according to the model plans of the Department was formerly calculated at eight square feet per scholar, and could be provided for less than £10 per head; but when deviations from these plans were sanctioned several years ago, at the request of some of the principal school boards in Scotland, the shape and arrangements of the rooms built according to the new plans rendered it necessary to calculate the space at 10 square feet. The sum of £10 per scholar being amply sufficient to provide accommodation upon the 10 square feet basis, that limit is adhered to.

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS—CHESHIRE (NORTHWICH DIVISION)—EMPLOYMENT OF POST OFFICE CLERKS.

MR. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck) (for Mr. W. ABRAHAMS) (Glamorgan, Rhondda) asked the Postmaster General, Whether, during the recent election for the Northwich Division of Cheshire, an agent of Lord Henry Grosvenor employed a Post Office clerk a Runcorn to deliver circulars to the electors; if this clerk, in turn, employed other servants of the Post Office to deliver circulars, for which all were paid at the rate of one halfpenny each; if it is true that nearly 500 out of the 3,000 circulars, issued by the agent of the Liberal candidate, were returned undelivered by the Post Office officials at Runcorn; if when these circulars were submitted to the overseer, did he pronounce most of the addresses to be correct; and, what action will he take with respect to the conduct of this official?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): The only officers of the Post Office at Runcorn who appear to have been concerned in the delivery of circulars during the recent election were five postmen, who were employed for the purpose by a printer in the town, and did the work when off duty, and without the knowledge of the postmaster. They state, in explanation, that they did not know they were doing wrong, being off duty; but I do not approve of the proceeding, and have cautioned the men. Three hundred and fifty-nine circulars issued by the Liberal agent and 248 issued by the Conservative agent were returned undelivered on account of insufficient or incorrect address. I am assured that every possible effort was made to deliver them, many being sent out two or three times. Members experienced in electioneering well know that this is of frequent occurrence at elections on account of removals.

POST OFFICE (EDINBURGH)—NON-DELIVERY OF TELEGRAMS.

MR. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.) asked the Postmaster General, Whether his attention has been called to Correspondence that has passed between the General Post Office, Edinburgh, and Messrs. Ciceri, with regard to the non-delivery of a telegram handed in on the 4th of June at the Inverness Post Office, for despatch to that firm; whether the address "Ciceri, Edinburgh," had for years been accepted as sufficient by the Edinburgh Post Office, and letters and telegrams delivered accordingly; and, under what authority the Post Office declines to deliver telegrams adequately addressed for the purposes of identification, and demands, as a condition of delivery, either that the full street address shall be inserted in a telegram, or that any shorter address shall be registered?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): My attention has been called to the Correspondence referred to by the hon.

Member. The Regulations of the Department require that the address of a telegram shall be sufficiently full to permit of delivery being effected without difficulty, and without reference to Directories. The address "Ciceri, Edinburgh," does not fulfil these conditions, and has not been registered, consequently the message was properly treated as insufficiently addressed. As has been explained, in reply to previous Questions, it is obviously improper that the messages of persons using a full address should be delayed while search is being made in Directories, &c., in order to effect the delivery of messages in which the address has been for any reason curtailed.

POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—INCREASED MAIL ACCOMMODATION IN THE NORTH OF IRELAND.

MR. M'CARTAN (Down, S.) asked the Postmaster General, Whether he can now state if definite arrangements have been made with the Belfast and County Down Railway to provide for the increased mail accommodation required for Newtownards and Downpatrick; and, if so, what additional services will be given?

COLONEL WARING (Down, N.) asked, whether an arrangement would be made which would provide for sufficient time between the delivery of the day mail at Newtownards and the going out of the other day mail to permit of letters being answered on the same day?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): I shall be glad to bear in mind the suggestion of my hon. and gallant Friend. In reply to the Question of the hon. Member for South Down, I beg to state that although practically an agreement has been arrived at with the Belfast and County Down Railway Company for improved mail train services, the exact details have not yet been finally adjusted. The new services cannot, however, come into operation until the 1st October next; but I shall have pleasure in acquainting my hon. and gallant Friend and the hon. Member with the exact details as soon as I am able to do so.

METROPOLITAN POLICE FORCE—AGE AND SERVICE.

MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, How many constables of the Metropolitan Police Force either are over 35 years of age or have had more than 10 years' service?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): Exclusive of the Thames and Dockyard Divisions there are in the Force 4,227 constables who are over 35 years of age, or had more than 10 years' service.

WAR OFFICE—FIRE AT TRILLICK, COUNTY LONGFORD.

MR. HAYDEN (Leitrim, S.) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether information has reached him that, on the 24th of July last, a large rick of turf, the property of James Fitzpatrick, of Trillick, near Longford, was destroyed by fire; whether, on the day the fire broke out, the Militia were engaged in musketry practice on the ground; whether, in reply to a Memorial addressed to Dublin Castle on the subject, Sir Redvers Buller admitted that the turf had been accidentally burned at the rifle range on the day the Militia were practising, and gave, as the only ground for the Irish Government not giving compensation, that the fire did not take place on either of the days the Constabulary were engaged in practising; whether, from this admission, and on other grounds, there is reason to believe that the accidental fire was due to the presence of the Militia; and, whether, under all the circumstances, the Government will take into consideration the question of making compensation to this poor man for the loss of his winter's fuel?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle), in reply, said, the fire referred to did break out on the day on which the Militia were practising at the range. It broke out in several places, and could not in any way be affected by the presence of the Militia. There was not, under the circumstances, sufficient evidence that the Militia caused the fire, and he was unable to sanction compensation being given.

MR. HAYDEN asked, if evidence was given that the Militia actually lighted two fires in proximity to the turf, and set fire to the bog, would the right hon. Gentleman reconsider the Question.

MR. E. STANHOPE replied that if there was additional evidence he would reconsider the Question.

POST OFFICE—CENTRAL TELEGRAPH OFFICE—THE CLERICAL STAFF.

Mr. M'CARTAN (Down, S.) asked the Postmaster General, Whether his reply to the Petition of the second-class clerks employed at the Central Telegraph Office, presented in March, 1886, that the officers were for the time receiving less pay under the present classification than they might have received under the old system, applies to second-class only or to all classes equally; whether there are clerks who were promoted to the first-class last September whose service commenced in April, 1877; whether there are now waiting at the top of the second-class clerks whose service commenced in May, 1877, and in some cases earlier, and whose service now is longer than that of the first-class clerks referred to; whether there are clerks in the first-class who were not passed over for promotion, and who have longer service than some of the senior clerks; and, whether he will state what steps he proposes to take with regard to extending the senior class in the Central Telegraph Office, and in the London District, in order to meet future requirements?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University): In reply to the hon. Member, I have to state that my reply to the Petition applies only to a few officers on the second-class, and not to all classes equally. My answer to the second and third Questions is "yes." As to the fourth Question, there are first-class clerks, who were not passed over in the recent promotion, whose continuous service in the Department is longer than the service of some of the senior clerks; but those senior clerks were promoted in the past for their superior acquirements. I am not prepared to state what decision I shall arrive at with respect to any addition to the number of senior clerks.

EVICTIONS (IRELAND)—THE BODYKE TENANTRY.

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether Mr. O'Callaghan, a son of Colonel John O'Callaghan, of Bodyke, has notice at the Scariff Workhouse for several evictions; and, if so, whether, in view of the great expense incurred by the State in evicting his father's tenants, the Irish Government will make some inquiry into the merits of these evictions before supplying the necessary forces to carry them out?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said, he understood that notice had been given to the workhouse authorities of several evictions on the O'Callaghan estate; but no arrangement had yet been made for carrying out the duty, as negotiations for a settlement were pending.

Mr. DILLON said, the right hon. and gallant Gentleman had not answered that part of his Question which asked if the Irish Government would make inquiry into the merits of these evictions?

Colonel KING-HARMAN said, he had replied that negotiations were still pending; and, therefore, it was impossible that the evictions could take place.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—M. J. MELVIN AND JAMES KING, CONVICTED OF CRIMINAL CONSPIRACY AT MUNSTER WINTER ASSIZES.

Mr. CRILLY (Mayo, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention had been called to the case of Matthew J. Melvin and James King, who were sentenced respectively to five years' penal servitude at the Munster Winter Assizes of 1883, on a charge of being members of a criminal conspiracy in Mayo, and who, while awaiting trial, were kept in prison, and confined to their cells 22 hours daily, for 10 months, bail being refused in the meantime by the Queen's Bench, on the express understanding that, if convicted, a remission of sentence would be allowed equal to the time the accused were detained; if the then Chief Secretary (Sir George Trevelyan) answered in this House, in reply to a Question—

> "That all such prisoners so kept back from trial, and not admitted to bail, would, in case of being convicted, be allowed a remission equal to the time so detained;"

and if, taking into consideration this preliminary punishment, and the promises made, as well as the usual remission allowed for hard work and good conduct, he will consider whether these men might now be released on licence?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman)

(Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: These two convicts were in custody, awaiting trial, from June, 1883, until March, 1884. This fact was fully before the learned Judge when he passed sentence on them. There was no such understanding as that alluded to, nor is there any record of the then Chief Secretary having made the statement attributed to him. The case of these convicts has been already fully considered at various times in connection with Memorials put forward by them or on their behalf. The last Memorial was received towards the end of last month, which embodied all the allegations contained in this Question. The Lord Lieutenant has decided that the law must take its course.

EGYPT (FINANCE, &c.)—FURTHER PAPERS.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, When further Papers on the Finance of Egypt (in continuation of Egypt (No. 3), 1887) will be presented?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): I hope that the Papers will be presented to Parliament in a few days.

IRISH LAND COURT—ASSISTANT COMMISSIONERS.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, To state the names of the Assistant Commissioners appointed since the present Government came into Office; also the term for which they have been appointed; and the nature of their occupation for the 12 months preceding their appointment?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The following Assistant Commissioners of the Land Court have been appointed since the present Government came into Office:—M. J. Crean, John F. Bomford, Legal Commissioners; Robert Sproule, John Golding, Hugh K. Simpson, J. R. Haedech, M. P. Lynch, H. Charles Gregory, Colonel Davys, and John Wilson, Lay Commissioners. Each of these gentlemen holds office to the 22nd of August, 1888. There are no official records to afford a reply to the concluding portion of the Question?

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (SCOTLAND)—JAMES GILLESPIE'S FOUNDATION, EDINBURGH.

MR. WALLACE (Edinburgh, E.) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether the Governors of the State-Aided School on James Gillespie's Foundation, Edinburgh, by their Regulations for the discipline of the school, authorize pupil teachers and assistants to inflict corporal punishment on the children attending the school, without consulting the head master, and to exercise their own discretion as to the severity of the punishment, the age of the children to be punished, and the choice of inflicting the punishment either in presence of the class or in private without any witness; whether, if this is so, he will call the attention of the Scottish Education Department to the condition of matters; and, whether, if the facts be otherwise, he will state what are the Regulations of the Governors on the subject?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): The discipline of the school is a matter for which the Governors are responsible, and I am not aware of the nature of their Regulations on the subject. The Scotch Education Department has no power to interfere between the managers of a State-aided school and the teachers, except where the requirements of the Code have been infringed. Any case of excessive punishment is a matter for the Criminal Authorities to investigate, if it is brought under their notice.

MR. WALLACE: Might I ask the right hon. and learned Gentleman whether he has made any inquiry as to what the Rules are?

MR. J. H. A. MACDONALD: If any charge is made to the Criminal Authorities, of whom I am one, the matter will certainly be gone into.

VACCINATION ACTS—IMPRISONMENT OF MRS. WALTON, OF APPLEBY.

MR. M'CARTAN (Down, S.) asked the President of the Local Government Board, Whether his attention has been called to a letter, signed "William Young," published in *The Echo*, of the 15th instant, complaining of the treatment given to Mrs. Walton, of Appleby, for having refused to have her child vaccinated; whether Mrs. Walton was arrested under warrant on the 10th, and sent to Carlisle Gaol for 14 days; whether, as stated in the letter, Mrs. Walton was, when in gaol, subjected to the same treatment as felons; whether her rings (except her wedding ring) were taken from her fingers, herself stripped naked and put into a bath, and informed—

> "That she must wear the prison garb, and be locked in a solitary cell, and that no friends would be allowed to visit her;"

whether she asked for a cup of tea, and was told that nothing but bread and water would be allowed her; whether she declared that, owing to her poverty, she was wholly unable to pay the alternative fine; whether some friends, on hearing of the treatment given to her, paid the fine under protest, and thus procured her release from gaol; and, whether he will take steps to prevent mothers, who are opposed to vaccination, from being exposed to such treatment in the future?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): Yes, Sir; I have seen the letter in question. I am informed by the Governor of the prison that Mrs. Walton was treated in the way prescribed by the Statutes and Prison Rules, and there was nothing exceptional in her treatment. She was searched by a female officer, the searching of prisoners being enjoined by Statute. She was not put in a bath. Her rings were taken from her, except the wedding ring. She was told she would have the ordinary diet of her class. She did not plead poverty, and she had a good dress on, three rings, a gold watch, and a cameo brooch. She was in prison for less than two hours, and was under no treatment further than being locked up in the reception cell. Every facility was given her to send for and see the friend who, she said, had her cheque book, and who afterwards paid the fine for her by cheque.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—ESTATE OF A. M. SOMERVILLE, OF ROSS, CO. MEATH, A LUNATIC.

MR. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.) (for Mr. MAHONY) (Meath, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he will inquire into the circumstances under which a lunatic, named A. M. Somerville, of Ross, County Meath, who is a Ward of the Court of Chancery, has been evicted from the demesne of Ross, of which he held a fee farm grant; whether Mr. Somerville's property is managed by a receiver under the Court of Chancery; and, if so, why the rent has not been paid; whether any effort has been made to sell Somerville's interest in the property; whether the timber on the estate belongs to Somerville, and whether the receiver made any effort to sell the timber; and, what provision, if any, has been made for the care of the lunatic?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: I understand that the property of James Somerville, a person of unsound mind, has been under the care of a receiver appointed by the Lord Chancellor. It consisted of property in the County Roscommon, and Ross House, in the County Cavan. There was an annual deficit of about £103 on Ross House, which, up to May, 1886, was met by the receiver out of the proceeds of the Roscommon estate. The property was heavily incumbered; and there being a large arrear of interest, the incumbrancers obtained an order setting priorities, which had the effect of preventing the receiver from any longer meeting the deficit in the manner stated until the arrears of interest should be paid. The rent of Ross House therefore fell into arrear, and the lunatic and his family were evicted. An attempt was made to sell the timber; but it was found that its value would not pay the cost of felling and transportation. The Lord Chancellor directed Ross House and demesne to be sold by public auction. The lunatic interrupted the sale. The bids were withdrawn and the sales abandoned. Subsequent attempts to sell by private treaty were ineffectual. The lunatic is now living with his family in a house which has been taken for them in the neighbourhood. The rent of the house and an allowance of £150 a-year are paid by the receiver.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—CASE OF PHILIP QUIGLEY.

MR. P. O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether a man, named Philip Quigley, was committed to Dundalk Gaol on the 20th of May last, and is still confined there; by whom, and upon what charge, and for what term was he so committed?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said, that Philip Quigley was committed to Dundalk Prison on the 23rd of May last. He was committed by the County Court Judge of Monaghan for contempt of Court.

MR. P. O'BRIEN asked, if the right hon. and gallant Gentleman could state what the contempt of Court was?

COLONEL KING-HARMAN said, that was not in the Question; but he believed that it was for refusing to sign a document which he was ordered to sign by the Judge.

VENEZUELA AND BRITISH GUIANA—THE BOUNDARY QUESTION.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, Camlachie) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether he is aware if the President of Venezuela left Caracas on the 9th instant for Paris *viâ* New York, with a view to re-opening negotiations as to the Boundary Question?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): No information has reached the Foreign Office of the President having actually left Venezuela; but we have heard indirectly that he intended to do so. I am not at all aware of his purpose.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, Camlachie) asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether the Governor of British Guiana has sailed to resume his duties; and, whether he has received definite instructions as to the steps to be taken to protect the boundary up to the frontier now declared by the Government to be British territory?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir HENRY HOLLAND) (Hampstead): The Governor is on his way back to the Colony. As Her Majesty's Government have no reason to anticipate any attempt on the part of Venezuela to encroach on the territory claimed by Great Britain, it was not thought necessary to give the Governor specific instructions as to the steps to be taken to protect the boundary.

POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—ACCELERATED MAIL SERVICE TO KINVARA.

MR. SHEEHY (Galway, S.) asked the Postmaster General, Whether he will make arrangements by which Kinvara may derive the advantages of the accelerated mail service, in so far, at least, as to get a mid-day delivery of the letters sent on there by the morning mails, and reaching Ardrahan, five miles distant, at an early hour?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): I beg to state that the question of effecting a mid-day delivery of letters at Kinvara must depend on the number of letters for delivery, and the expense to be incurred in delivering them. Returns are being prepared; and as soon as they are completed, and I have considered them, I will lose no time in arriving at a decision.

WAR OFFICE—REGIMENTAL BANDS AT PUBLIC MEETINGS—THE YORKSHIRE REGIMENT.

MR. A. E. PEASE (York) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether his attention had been called to an account of a Primrose League gathering at Thirkleby Park, which appeared in *The York Herald* of Saturday 6th August, in which it is stated that the band of the Yorkshire Regiment, from York, was stationed on the ground; and, whether such account is accurate?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): The band of the 3rd Battalion of the Yorkshire Regiment played at a flower show at Thirkleby Park on the invitation of the Secretary to the Thirkleby Park and District Horticultural Society. Nothing was said in the invitation of any political intention in the meeting; and, so far as I can learn, it had no political significance whatever.

WAR OFFICE—BANDSMEN—ATTENDANCE OF REGIMENTAL BANDS AT PUBLIC MEETINGS.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) asked the Secretary of State for War, How many bandsmen there are in the Army at Home, the Militia, the Yeomanry, and the Volunteers; whether he is aware that a large proportion of them have been in the habit of looking to the private engagements, in hours not required for military duty, of the regimental band to which they belong, as a legitimate source of livelihood; whether he has any reason to believe that the discretion heretofore vested in Commanding Officers, as to giving or withholding consent, has been abused; and, if such is not the case, if any adequate cause has been shown for the disturbance of the practice of the past, or for prohibiting the voluntary attendance of military bands at the social gatherings of persons in political sympathy?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): There are no Returns at the War Office from which the information sought could be given. I am aware that a large proportion of the bandsmen do look to private engagements as a means of increasing their income. I have no reason to believe that the discretion vested in Commanding Officers has been abused. There is no reason why these bands should not be engaged by people of any political opinion; but they must not attend political meetings in uniform.

PEACE PRESERVATION (IRELAND) ACT —GUN LICENCES—AMBROSE M'SWEENEY.

MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If it is a fact that Ambrose M'Sweeney, of Carrickcannon House, Falcaragh, Donegal, from whom a gun was taken, was a boy under 12 years of age; and, if there was an understanding with the magistrate that the gun should be restored to the boy's father?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said, this boy was apparently over 13 years of age. There was no such understanding as that alluded to in the latter part of the Question.

MR. COX (Clare, E.) asked, if the right hon. and gallant Gentleman was aware that this boy's father was in gaol at the time under the Coercion Act, and, therefore, could exercise no control over the boy's acts; and that the boy was arrested immediately outside the door, and that the case was dismissed with a caution on account of the boy's age. He could assure the right hon. and gallant Gentleman he was under 13 years of age.

COLONEL KING-HARMAN said, he did not think the facts had been as suggested by the hon. Member. He had answered that he was not proceeded against under the Peace Preservation Act on account of his youth; but there was no arrangement such as had been stated in the Question.

SOUTH AFRICA—AMATONGALAND—ANNEXATION.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne) asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether it is the fact that the Queen Regent of Amatongaland has petitioned Her Majesty to annex that country, in consequence of the encroachments of the Portuguese on her territory; and, whether it is the fact that the Portuguese are threatening to occupy any of her territory?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir HENRY HOLLAND) (Hampstead): The Queen of Tongaland has more than once petitioned for British protection for annexation, and the question of the future relations to be established with her is still under consideration. In the meantime, a Treaty of friendship has been concluded with her, under which she binds herself not to enter into any Treaty with, or cede any territory to, any Foreign Power unless with the consent of Her Majesty's Government. The present proceedings of the Portuguese appear to be confined to the country north of the Maputa River and 26·30 degrees of south latitude, to which their claims were declared well founded by the award of the President of the French Republic, dated the 24th of July, 1875, in the Delagoa Bay arbitration. Portugal is debarred by that award from extending her dominion south of thsoe limits.

IRELAND—THE CUSTOM HOUSE, CORK —MERCHANDIZE UNDER BOND — RIGHTS OF LESSEES.

MR. P. M'DONALD (Sligo, N.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether the lessee of the Cork Custom House is privileged to use a portion of the Government premises in his capacity of wholesale trader; whether, as warehouse keeper, he is entitled to inform himself of the names and addresses of the shippers and consignees of the goods bonded in his warehouse, and to use this information as a trade competitor; whether he is aware that, in consequence, certain Cork wholesale merchants have ceased to use the Custom House, and now store their goods in the Excise Warehouse instead; and, whether, under these circumstances, on the next renewal of the lease, he will require the lessee to confine himself solely to his business of warehouse keeper?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.) (who replied) said: The warehouse in question belongs to the Crown, and is leased to Mr. Foley as a warehouse for the warehousing of tobacco and goods under bond, and for such other lawful business as may be desired. He can, therefore, deal as a wholesale trader. There is nothing to prevent any warehouse-keeper from informing himself of the names and addresses of the shippers and consignees of the goods bonded in his warehouse, and if he thinks fit to use the information as a trade competitor. It is believed to be a fact that certain Cork wholesale merchants object to store their goods in this warehouse for this and other reasons. The lease expires on the 1st of October, 1903, but it may be determined at the end of each third year of the term by either party; it would be contrary to custom to place any restrictions on the trading practices of a warehouse-keeper so long as they do not interfere with the Customs Regulations.

NATIONAL EDUCATION (IRELAND)—NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS.

MR. P. M'DONALD (Sligo, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he will, in deference to the unanimous request of the National Teachers of Ireland, recommend the Commissioners to send the result of the examinations through the District Inspectors, as formerly, instead of the Managers, as at present?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The Commissioners of National Education inform me they have arranged that in all cases of promotion the usual notification shall be made to the Managers. In cases of failure the notification will be made to the Inspector only, to whom Managers and teachers, if they so desire, can apply for information and details. In the case of unclassed teachers who fail to pass the qualifying examination for the lowest class, and who cannot be retained in the service, the notification will necessarily be made to the Managers.

NORTH SEA FISHERIES CONVENTION — SEIZURE OF THE SMACK "LADY GODIVA."

MR. HENEAGE (Great Grimsby) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether the Government have ever inquired into any of the circumstances connected with the seizure of the *Lady Godiva*, on the 13th of May, and the arrest of the skipper Funnell, in the North Sea, in direct contravention of the North Seas Fisheries Convention, or under what authority Funnell was re-arrested, on the 16th of May, at Wilhelmshaven, after his release on the 14th, and on what charge, or why Funnell was detained in Flensburg Prison for six weeks, after being brought before and acquitted by Judicial Court at Flensburg, on the 30th of May, when he was promised his release in a few days, or on what charges he was afterwards brought before another Judicial Court, on the 21st of July, when he was again acquitted, and his gear ordered to be restored to him; and, what action the Board of Trade have taken during the last three months to call the attention of the German Government to the conduct of the Commander of the German cruiser, the Mayor of Wilhelmshaven, and other Local Authorities in this case, and to the prolonged confinement and harsh treatment of Funnell in prison, or to obtain any information with regard to the various judicial inquiries or trials, and the evidence and Judgments given in the Courts on the 13th of May, 30th of May, and 21st of July respectively?

MR. HENEAGE (for Sir EDWARD BIRKBECK) (Norfolk, E.) also asked, Whether Her Majesty's Government have now received the "Judgment," in the *Lady Godiva* case; and, if not, whether they will at once urge the German Government to forward the same without further delay; whether the Board of Trade have received any further official communication relative to the facts of the German cruiser firing into, and running down, the *Lady Godiva*; and, what steps the Fishery Department have taken to inquire into the allegations made on behalf of the master and crew of the *Lady Godiva?*

THE SECRETARY (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): As early as the 20th of May Her Majesty's Consul General at Hamburg made to the Foreign Office a Report in relation to the case of the fishing vessel *Lady Godiva.* In consequence of particulars afterwards communicated to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs by the right hon. Member (Mr. Heneage), the Consul General was directed to proceed to Wilhelmshaven and inquire into and report as fully as possible on the case, and also to watch the proceedings and afford the master such assistance as he properly could. Subsequently, the Foreign Office, on the suggestion of the Board of Trade, urged upon the German Government the propriety of expediting the trial of the master. In the interval the case had, however, been dealt with. Several Reports have been made to the Foreign Office by Consul General Dundas; but for their due consideration exact particulars of the judicial proceedings are needful. He has been instructed, at the request of the Board of Trade, to obtain and forward as soon as possible a full and reliable Report of the proceedings in the German Courts. Further action has, meanwhile, necessarily been deferred. The right hon. Member must, of course, be aware that any representations to a Foreign Government must be made exclusively through the Foreign Office. With regard to the question of the hon. Baronet, the Report of the proceedings in the German Courts with respect to the case of the fishing vessel *Lady Godiva* has not yet been received; but steps have been taken with a view of obtaining the Report as speedily as possible. The only further particulars which have reached the Board of Trade are statements forwarded by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Great Grimsby on the part of the master of this vessel; and this day the Foreign Office have sent a despatch from the Consul General at Hamburg, stating that the Public Prosecutor at Flensburg, being dissatisfied with the judgment of the Court, has appealed against it to Leipsic. As regards the concluding portion of the Question of the hon. Baronet, I would refer to the reply which I have just made to a similar inquiry by the right hon. Member for Great Grimsby.

MR. HENEAGE asked, whether the Department had made an inquiry with regard to the sentence of the 13th of May, the release of Funnell, and why he was re-arrested; and why the man was detained for six weeks without any change of clothing, after being told that he would be immediately released?

BARON HENRY DE WORMS: Yes, Sir; Reports have been called for on all those subjects.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT—BOARD SCHOOLS—NON-ATTENDANCE.

MR. J. G. TALBOT (Oxford University): asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, Whether his attention has been called to the difficulties experienced in some districts in enforcing penalties inflicted upon parents for not sending their children to school; and, whether he will issue a Circular to School Boards and School Attendance Committees, drawing their attention to the subject, and explaining the course of proceeding which should be adopted?

THE VICE PRESIDENT (Sir WILLIAM HART DYKE) (Kent, Dartford): The attention of the Department has been very often directed to this subject; and it is one of those upon which it may be hoped that the Royal Commission will be able to make some useful suggestions. But it is not a matter upon which the Education Department can interfere.

MERCHANT SHIPPING—LEGISLATION—INTERNATIONAL REGULATIONS OF NAVIGATION.

MR. CHANNING (Northampton, E.) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether his attention has been called to the recommendation of the Council of the Mercantile Marine Service Association, that the International Regulations of Navigation should be so amended that distinctive signals, by long and short blasts on a steam whistle or fog horn, to indicate the course of vessels, shall be used in fogs as well as when another vessel is in sight, and to the finding of the Court of Inquiry in the case of the collision between the *Britannic* and the *Celtic*, that the present system of signals is not sufficiently distinctive; and, whether, having regard to the frequency of fog, especially in the North Atlantic, and the increasing number and speed of steam vessels, the Board of Trade will enter into communication with the United States and other Governments with the view of minimising the risk of collision in fog, by amendment of the International Regulations in the manner suggested by the Mercantile Marine Service Association?

The SECRETARY (Baron Henry De Worms) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): The attention of the Board of Trade has been directed to the Report of the inquiry held in the case of the collision between the *Britannic* and *Celtic*, and also to the recommendations by the Mercantile Marine Service Association relative to the present system of signalling at sea during fogs, and the Board of Trade are carefully considering them. The second paragraph of the hon. Member's Question raises such important considerations that I am not at present prepared to give him a reply.

PUBLIC OFFICES—THE NEW ADMIRALTY AND WAR OFFICE—MESSRS. LEEMING'S CLAIMS.

Mr SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central) asked the First Commissioner of Works, Whether he will lay upon the Table of the House the Correspondence between the Government and Messrs. Leeming and Company which has resulted in the proposal in the Supplementary Estimates for a Vote of £8,500?

The FIRST COMMISSIONER (Mr. Plunket) (Dublin University): The proposal in the Supplementary Estimates to pay Messrs. Leeming £8,000 in full satisfaction of their claims has resulted from the Report of the Select Committee on the Admiralty and War Office Sites, which sat this year, and by a very large majority recommended that the scheme known as Messrs. Leeming's should be abandoned, and the additional sum of £500 will be asked for the preparation of plans for extending the existing Admiralty buildings, as also recommended by the Select Committee. Messrs. Leeming have acted with perfect propriety in the matter; and from the communications which have passed between them and my Department, I have no grounds for supposing that we shall have any difficulty in dealing with them. Under these circumstances, I see no reason for laying on the Table of the House the correspondence which has taken place; but I shall willingly show the letters to the right hon. Gentleman, should he wish to see them.

Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE asked, If the Vote of £500 in the Estimates would commit the House to the plans referred to?

Mr. PLUNKET: To that extent certainly it will.

In reply to a further Question,

Mr. PLUNKET added that he would endeavour to have the evidence taken before the Committee and the plans issued to Members before the Vote was taken.

ARMY (AUXILIARY FORCES) — SCOTTISH ARTILLERY VOLUNTEERS.

Mr. MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether it is the case that, at the recent Government camp of Scottish Artillery Volunteers held at Barry, no officer attended, and only 66 non-commissioned officers and men belonging to corps situated in the West of Scotland, these corps comprising 47 batteries, with a total strength of 3,845 officers, non-commissioned officers, and men; and, if so, whether the Government will cause an inquiry to be made into the reasons for this anomaly before fixing the *locale* of the Government camp for next year?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. E. Stanhope) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): I am afraid it is quite true that there was a very small attendance at the recent Artillery Volunteer camp at Barry; but I am advised that there is no other site suitable and available for this camp. I would remind my hon. Friend that there is only one Artillery camp in England, and many Volunteers go a very long way to attend it.

Mr. MARK STEWART asked, whether the right hon. Gentleman knew that Irvine had been proposed as a more suitable site?

Mr. E. STANHOPE said, he knew it had been under consideration; and he would undertake, after what had been said by his hon. Friend, that before another year the matter would be further examined into.

RAILWAYS (ENGLAND AND WALES)—THE STRIKE OF ENGINE DRIVERS AND FIREMEN ON THE MIDLAND RAILWAY.

MR. P. O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether his attention has been called to the following telegram, published by the Central News Agency on the 16th instant:—

> "This morning Midland engine running on wrong line collided with Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire goods train near Barnsley, tenders and number of trucks were smashed, and line blocked for some time; four men were injured, and one, the fireman of Midland engine, had to have his arm amputated;"

and, whether he will cause an inquiry to be held into the circumstances of this accident with a view of ascertaining whether it was in any way due to the employment of engine drivers unacquainted with the Midland system?

THE SECRETARY (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): The Board of Trade have directed an inquiry to be made into this accident. I may add that the Midland Company inform the Board of Trade that the driver of this train has been in their service many years, and is the oldest driver at Barnsley. The Midland Company say that apparently the accident was caused by the signalman of the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Company at Dodsworth pulling the wrong lever.

ECCLESIASTICAL COMMISSIONERS — COMPULSORY REDEMPTION OF TITHE—SAWBRIDGNORTH, HERTS.

MR. H. GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden) asked the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Western Division of Essex, as an Ecclesiastical Commissioner, Whether it is true that the Ecclesiastical Commissioners have applied to the Land Commissioners to direct the compulsory redemption of tithes in certain lands in the parish of Sawbridgnorth, Hertfordshire; whether the consequence of such action is that the owners of these lands are compelled to redeem at 25 times the amount of the apportioned tithe rent-charge; whether the present value of the £100 tithe rent-charge is £87 8*s.* 10*d.*; whether the proportion of the expenses payable in addition to the 25 years' redemption by the landowner does not in some cases practically raise the redemption to as much as 37 years' purchase; and, whether, in any compulsory redemption of tithe, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners will take into consideration the advisability of adopting as a maximum a period of 20 years' purchase, as suggested by the Tithe Rent-Charge Bill of Her Majesty's Government?

SIR HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON (Essex, Epping): My answer to the first Question of the hon. Member is, Yes. My answer to the second is also, Yes. But we are compelled to act so by Statute under the 5th section of the Commutation Act, 1878. The value of the £100 is as stated in the Question. We have, as Commissioners, no cognizance of the expenses, which are entirely governed by the action of the Land Commission; and as regards the last Question, should the Tithe Bill pass, we shall be prepared to act upon its provisions, and adopt the term of years sanctioned by it. I may say that I understand that the tithe redemptions in Sawbridgnorth, which are few in number, are on the point of completion.

AFRICA (WEST COAST)—THE RIVER GAMBIA.

MR. MOWBRAY (Lancashire, Prestwich) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether Her Majesty's Government have received information that officers of the French Government of Senegal have appointed certain Chiefs to rule over the countries of Badiboo Saba and Sangally, which are on the north bank of the British River Gambia, and which are under British influence; whether Her Majesty's Government are aware that the French officers have allotted territories to these Chiefs, and concluded Treaties with them; and, what steps Her Majesty's Government are taking to put a stop to this interference with the rights and commerce of Great Britain?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): The information received by the Colonial Office does not bear out the statements contained in my hon. Friend's Question. Disturbances have taken place at Badiboo and other places in the vicinity of the Gambia, and questions with regard to the respective interests of France and England have arisen. Her Majesty's Government are now in communication with the French

Government with a view to the conclusion of a satisfactory settlement of the outstanding differences and a maintenance of any British rights which may be involved.

NEW GUINEA—SETTLEMENTS IN THE BRITISH PROVINCE.

Mr. J. CORBETT (Worcestershire, Droitwich) asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether any provision or stipulation was made when the settlement of the New Guinea question was discussed at the late Conference for throwing New Guinea (British) open to British trade; if, on the proclamation of Her Majesty's sovereignty, encouragement and protection will be given to pioneers willing to invest capital in promoting trade and in developing the natural resources of the country; has Her Majesty's Government received any proposals or applications from responsible persons desirous of promoting settlements in New Guinea; and, have any feasible schemes for New Guinea development been submitted for the consideration of Her Majesty's Government by persons of local knowledge and well accredited from the Colonies, and with what result?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Sir Henry Holland) (Hampstead): This subject was not discussed at the Colonial Conference. The extent to which pioneer settlers can be encouraged will depend upon local considerations, the principal of which is the necessity of protecting the Natives from undue interference with their lands. Her Majesty's Government have received, through the Special Commissioner for New Guinea and otherwise, proposals from persons acquainted with the country who desire to promote trade and settlement. It is not proposed to deal with these applications until Her Majesty's sovereignty has been proclaimed, when they will be referred to the Administrator of New Guinea for careful consideration and report; and until then the Government cannot pronounce an opinion upon their feasibility.

THE QUEEN'S JUBILEE—RECEPTION OF THE NATIVE INDIAN PRINCES.

Mr. P. O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether he has seen a report published by *The Times of India* (and reproduced in the London papers), of an interview with Maharajah Holkar of Indore on his return from England, in which His Highness is alleged to have stated, referring to his reception in England in connection with Her Majesty's Jubilee—

> "The inferior officials were apparently unaware what was due to the dignity of the representatives of the Empire;"

whether he can state if the Maharajah Holkar, Thakore Sahib of Gondal, or any other of the distinguished Indians who attended Her Majesty's Jubilee, made similar complaints before leaving England; and, whether the Secretary of State for India has caused any inquiry to be made respecting those complaints; if so, whether he has any objection to give the names of the officials complained of, the nature of their offence, and state what further action he proposes to take in the matter?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Sir John Gorst) (Chatham): Neither the Maharajah Holkar, the Thakore Sahib of Gondal, nor any other of the Indian Chiefs who attended Her Majesty's Jubilee ever made any complaint of the kind. On the contrary, as I stated a day or two ago, they thanked the Secretary of State in the most cordial terms for their reception.

ADMIRALTY—THE NAVAL MANŒUVRES—CHARTS.

Commander BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether Rear Admiral Fremantle had proper charts on board H.M.S. *Agincourt* during the recent Naval practice, to enable him to operate north of the Thames if he desired to do so; and, if so, to what latitude his charts extended?

The FIRST LORD (Lord George Hamilton) (Middlesex, Ealing): The charts supplied to the *Agincourt* would have enabled Admiral Fremantle to operate in the North Sea as far as lat. 52° 10′, 40 miles to the northward of the Tongue Lightship, at the entrance to the Thames, and as far eastward as the Coast of Holland.

LAW AND POLICE—POLICE SUPERVISION OF DISORDERLY HOUSES.

Mr. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether it is the practice for the police of Provincial towns, who are under the control of the Local Authorities, to watch disorderly houses; whether, before deciding upon the recent Order that the Metropolitan Police shall discontinue this practice, Sir Charles Warren consulted, or in any way communicated with, the Metropolitan Board of Works or the Vestries as being the Local Authorities of the Metropolis; and, if so, with which, and what was the nature of the communications; and, how long prior to the issue of Sir Charles Warren's Order the practice had prevailed of employing the Metropolitan Police to watch disorderly houses?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I am not aware whether it is the practice of the Provincial police to watch disorderly houses. Sir Charles Warren is away on leave; but I am informed by Colonel Pearson that, so far as he is aware, Sir Charles Warren did not communicate with the Local Authorities before the issue of the Order that the Metropolitan Police should discontinue the practice. The practice had prevailed for many years, certainly over 20 years.

WAR OFFICE (ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT)—DISPOSAL OF DISUSED MILITARY CLOTHING.

MR. HANBURY (Preston) asked the Secretary of State for War, In what manner the rejected or disused military clothing of the United Kingdom and the Channel Islands is now disposed of, and what amount it has produced during the last two years; whether, until recently, this contract was submitted for public competition; whether that system has been abolished; and, if so, when and why; and, whether, at a recent monthly sale of miscellaneous goods at Woolwich Arsenal, waterproof sheets, which had hitherto been included in such sale, were withdrawn, and a private contract for them was made without competition?

THE SURVEYOR GENERAL OF ORDNANCE (Mr. NORTHCOTE) (Exeter) (who replied) said: The time-expired clothing of the Army is disposed of by contract, and the sum realized annually is about £44,000. Public competition for this contract has not been abolished; but, as Mr. Brand, the then Surveyor General of the Ordnance, explained in 1885, only two tenders at all satisfactory were received, and the contract was given to the highest bidder. It will expire on the 31st of March next. Up till April last old waterproof sheets were included in the Woolwich auction sales but at that time an offer was received for these articles at a price in excess of the average sum realized at the sales. This offer was advantageous to the Department, and was accepted for such waterproof sheets as might be for disposal during one year from the 1st of May last. Perhaps I may take this opportunity of saying that a Circular was issued in June last reminding Commanding Officers that soldiers were entitled to retain such articles of time-expired clothing as might be necessary to save their new clothing, or for use on fatigue duty.

LAW AND POLICE—ARREST OF A FRENCH LADY (MADAME DROUIN) AT COWES.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether the French lady arrested at Cowes for having had modelling clay in her trunk, mistaken for dynamite, has been discharged; how is it proposed to compensate her for the arrest and false imprisonment she endured; who is responsible for taking her into custody; whether, with a view to avoid incidents of this kind, detectives could be trained to distinguish dynamite from harmless substances; and, was there such a resemblance between the stuff seized in the trunk of this lady and any known explosive as to warrant her detention while scientific experiments were being made on the clay?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I see from the newspapers that the lady has been discharged; but until further inquiry is made I am unable to say whether it is a case for compensation. The Hampshire Constabulary are responsible for taking the lady into custody; and they acted on information received from Paris that a woman was to arrive at Cowes with a parcel of dynamite in her possession. To distinguish dynamite from harmless clayey substances requires the knowledge of an expert, which detectives generally cannot possess. I am unable to express any opinion as to the resemblance of the clay found in the lady's luggage to any explosive.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Will the right hon. Gentleman state what further inquiries he proposes to make? Can there be any question whether a lady who has been unjustly detained four days is or is not entitled to compensation?

MR. MATTHEWS: Of course, I wish to obtain further information from the police.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Is it not established, by the discharge of the lady, that she was innocent? Do the Government mean to say that a foreign lady who has arrived in this country, having been falsely arrested, they do not intend at once to entertain the question of compensation?

MR. MATTHEWS: As far as I can judge, there is no doubt at all that the lady was a harmless traveller; but the question of compensation depends upon whether the Police Authorities acted justifiably upon the information which they received.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne) wished to ask, what course would have been taken by the Foreign Office if this had occurred to one of our subjects in a foreign country?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

IRISH LAND COMMISSIONERS—THE IRISH LAND LAW BILL—INSTRUCTIONS.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Was the request of the Irish Land Commissioners for information as to how a Bill should be construed in case it became law made by them on their own initiative or in response to an Executive communication; if the latter, what was the date of it and the terms; what was the date of the letter of the Land Commission; do the Government intend to follow the practice of Parliament in regard to the latter document, which necessitates the laying upon the Table of any official communication used in debate: and, is it the fact that two out of the three Land Commissioners go out of office next year, and that their posts are in the gift of the Government of the day?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): The Land Commission made no request for information as to how a Bill should be construed in case it became law. What was desired was that more specific guidance should be given to a Commission which was not required by the proposed clause to act as a Court of Law so much as a Court of Arbitration. Their request was not made in response to an Executive communication. Their letter was dated the 9th of August. There can be no objection to laying the letter on the Table of the House; though, as it was read in its entirety and is very short and simple in its terms, nothing would be gained by such a course. The statutory conditions of appointment are contained in the 41st section of the Land Act of 1881.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Might I ask the right hon. Gentleman, if the Land Commission has made any further communication on the subject of the Bill to the Government?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I have no further information to give the hon. and learned Member.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Are we to infer that the Government have made no communication to the Land Commission on the subject of the Bill?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I have no further information to give the hon. and learned Member.

MR. T. M. HEALY: May I ask the Attorney General, whether there is any precedent for Judges in Ireland applying to Her Majesty's Government for further guidance as to the construction of Statutes?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER) (Isle of Wight): Of course I cannot answer such a Question.

MR. T. M. HEALY gave Notice that he would move for copies of any Correspondence that had taken place between the Land Commission and the Government with regard to the present Irish Land Law Bill, and that he would move separately for a copy of the letter of the Land Commission which was read by the Chief Secretary a few days ago.

VACCINATION ACTS — PROSECUTION AT OTLEY, WEST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE.

MR. BARRAN (York, W.R., Otley) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, If his attention has been called to the cases of Jesse Stead, Thomas Bottomley, and Frederick Fawcett, who were summoned to appear before the West Riding Magistrates, sitting at Otley on the 29th of July, for non-compliance with an order made on them requiring the defendants to have their children vaccinated; and, whether, if the statement is true as stated, that the magistrates refused to hear Mr. J. H. Farthing, who appeared on behalf of the defendants, he will take steps to see that justice may be done in their cases, and prevent, as far as possible, the infraction of the 11th section of the Vaccination Act, which provides that the defendant in any proceedings under the prescribed Act may appear by any member of his family, or any other person authorized by him on his behalf?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): Yes, Sir; my attention has been called to this case, and I have received a Report from the Justices upon it. I am informed that Mr. Farthing was fully heard on behalf of the defendants when the case first came before the Justices. On that occasion orders were made that the children should be vaccinated within a month. When the summonses for non-compliance with these orders were heard on the 29th of July no medical certificate of unfitness, and no other evidence showing a reasonable excuse for non-compliance with the orders, was produced or given; and, under those circumstances, the Justices declined to hear Mr. Farthing again on the general subject of the objections to vaccination. There does not seem, therefore, to have been any material infraction of the 11th section of the Vaccination Act.

In reply to a further Question,

MR. MATTHEWS said, that if parents did not comply with an order they were summoned to show cause why they did not do so, and they were entitled to assign any reasonable ground of excuse for not having complied with the order, such as that a child was not in a fit condition to be vaccinated. But it was not a reasonable ground of excuse that a parent had a conscientious objection to vaccination.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): Have the magistrates a right to assume what will be the character of a defence to be offered by a defendant who has not complied with an order?

MR. MATTHEWS: Clearly not.

MR. BARRAN: Are the magistrates justified in refusing to hear a person appointed by defendants before they know the line he is going to take?

MR. MATTHEWS: I have said nothing of the sort. On the contrary, I think they are bound to hear all that the Statute requires to be heard.

MR. BARRAN: Will the right hon. Gentleman communicate with the magistrates to the effect that, as far as appearances go, they violate the law by refusing to hear Mr. Farthing.

[No reply.]

BOARD OF TRADE—STANDARDS DEPARTMENT—WEIGHTS AND MEASURES IN BIRKENHEAD.

MR. ISAACS (Newington, Walworth) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether the officials having charge of the weights and measures in Birkenhead have made serious allegations as to the inefficient mode in which the standards were locally compared by the officer in charge of the Standards Department in October, 1885, and returned by him in an unsatisfactory condition, necessitating their being sent to a firm in London for rectification, after they had been passed and stamped by him?

THE SECRETARY (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): No allegations as to the mode of comparison of local standards being inefficient have been made; but in 1885 the Inspector of Weights and Measures for Birkenhead represented that the standards had not been returned to him in a satisfactory condition. There is no instance of any local standard having been found to be in error, or to have required rectification, after having been passed by the Standards Department.

EGYPT—THE EGYPTIAN ARMY—NUMBERS.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, What is, or will be, the number of the Egyptian Army when the reductions now ordered are carried out; and, why the number is being reduced below what Sir Henry Drummond Wolff recommended?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): From the 1st of May last the Egyptian Army was reduced to a force of 9,393 men of all ranks. It will be seen from the Papers laid before Parliament (Egypt, No. 7, 1887, Nos. 46 and 54) that Sir Henry Drummond Wolff estimated the force required at from 8,000 to 10,000 men.

ADMIRALTY—ROYAL NAVAL RESERVED CRUISERS.

MR. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether arrangements have been made with the Peninsular and Oriental Steamship Company for the retention of any of their vessels on the list of the Royal Naval Reserved Cruisers for the protection of commerce in the event of hostilities; and, if such a contract has been made, will he state its general conditions, the names and leading particulars of the vessels which are to receive such a subvention, the amount of such subvention, and the names of any other vessels similar subventions secure to the service of the Admiralty?

THE FIRST LORD (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing): Arrangements have been made with the Peninsular and Oriental Company under which, in consideration of an annual subvention of about £3,500, payable in respect of each of three of their new ships—namely, the *Victoria*, *Britannia*, and *Oceana*, of 6,300 tons each—that Company engage to hold these steamers at the disposition of the Admiralty for service as armed cruisers or transports whenever required. That Company also engage to hold in the same manner at our disposal and for the same purposes, but without further charge, seven of their other steamers—namely, *Arcadia* (new), *Valetta*, *Massilia*, *Rome*, *Carthage*, *Ballarat*, and *Paramatta*. All these vessels, representing over 48,000 tons of shipping, especially the four new ones, possess a high rate of speed, and have an unusually large coal endurance. In the event of the Company building further steamers which the Admiralty consider more suitable than those named in the agreement we retain the right of substitution. The prices for hire or purchase are specified in the agreement. The agreement is determinable at 12 months' notice on either side. The vessels are to have such fittings placed on board as will enable them to be prepared at the shortest notice in the event of contingencies.

SOUTH AFRICA—THE BISHOPRIC OF NATAL.

MR. SUMMERS (Huddersfield) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether it is the fact that, by Letters Patent of 23rd November, 1853, Her Majesty created the late Bishop of Natal a "body corporate," to be a "perpetual corporation," and to "have perpetual succession;" and, whether, seeing that the Archbishop of Canterbury has declined to apply for a mandate for the consecration of the Rev. Sir G. W. Cox, as Bishop of the vacant See, Her Majesty's Ministers will take such steps as may be necessary to fulfil the pledges given by the Crown to the members of the Church of England in South Africa?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): The statement in the first paragraph of the Question as to the effect of the Letters Patent is correct. As to the second part of the Question, it was decided in 1884 that, having regard to the Report of the Committee of the Privy Council of the 24th of June, 1873, Her Majesty should not be advised to appoint by Letters Patent a successor to Bishop Colenso, and Her Majesty's present Advisers see no reason to depart from that decision.

REDUCTION OF FAMILY CHARGES UPON LAND—A SELECT COMMITTEE OR ROYAL COMMISSION.

MR. HALDANE (Haddington) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether the Government will take steps to have a Select Committee or Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the subject of proportionate reduction of family charges upon land?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I am sure the hon. and learned Gentleman will have anticipated the answer I am about to give, having regard to the very serious character of the Question. I am not able to enter into any engagement with him or with the House on the subject.

ROYAL PARKS AND PLEASURE GARDENS—WINDSOR FOREST.

SIR JOHN SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether he is aware that the keepers in Windsor Forest constantly turn back foot passengers who are using the green rides and roads through the Forest; whether there are numerous locked gates between the Forest and the high roads, and between portions of the Forest not communicating with the Park, or any place where deer are kept; and, whether the keepers receive their authority and instructions from the Commissioner of Woods and Forests; and, if not, why not?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): Her Majesty, in surrendering Windsor Park and the Forest as then existing, retained as her predecessors retained, the right of keeping deer and game and of appointing a Ranger, with the necessary staff. In order to prevent undue interference with the game or injury to the woods by persons using the Forest, and also in some cases to prevent the acquisition of rights of way, it may occasionally happen that persons are turned back. There is, however, but little restriction in the case of a considerable area of the Forest, which extends over about 14 square miles. In parts of the Forest adjoining the Park an outer deer fence is maintained to prevent deer from straying, and the gates in the outer fence are necessarily kept locked. The keepers are not under the control of the Commissioners of Woods, as they are appointed by Her Majesty and the Ranger.

LAW AND JUSTICE—RE-HEARING IN CAPITAL CASES OF FELONY—LEGISLATION.

MR. J. HOWARD (Middlesex, Tottenham) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether he will consider the desirability of introducing next Session a Bill for the purpose of enabling a re-hearing to be obtained in capital cases of felony where doubts arise after verdict and sentence?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster), in reply, said, he was not able to enter into any engagement of the character referred to in the Question.

CIVIL ESTABLISHMENTS AND ELEMENTARY EDUCATION ACTS (ENGLAND AND WALES)—THE ROYAL COMMISSIONS.

MR. KELLY (Camberwell, N.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, When it is intended to fill up the vacancies on the Royal Commission to inquire into the Civil Establishments, and the vacancy on the Royal Commission to inquire into the Elementary Education Acts in England and Wales?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): The question as to the necessity of filling up any vacancies that may exist in the Civil Establishments Commission will be considered later. At present the Commission is not sitting. Two vacancies that recently occurred in the Commission on the Elementary Education Acts in England and Wales have been filled up—the Duke of Norfolk and Mr. Lyulph Stanley appointed.

DISTRESSED UNIONS (IRELAND) BILL —MUNICIPAL REGULATION (CONSTABULARY, &c.) (BELFAST) BILL.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.) asked the Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland, Whether he was aware that the evidence taken before the Select Committee on the Municipal Regulation (Constabulary, &c.) (Belfast) Bill had not been circulated; and whether he would use his influence to have it placed in the hands of Members as soon as possible?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet), in reply, said, he was not aware that it had not been circulated; but he would make inquiries on the subject.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury or the Chief Secretary for Ireland to include in the statement of Business some information as to the course the Government proposed to adopt in relation to the Distressed Unions (Ireland) Bill. The Government had Notice for three weeks that the Irish Members would oppose this Bill to the uttermost; and it was now desirable that they should have some definite answer as to what course they proposed to take with regard to it.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.) said, their view of the Bill, as the House was aware, was that it was one of great importance to meet an immediate crisis in a particular locality, and if the hon. Gentleman and his Friends below the Gangway took the responsibility of blocking it the Government could not help it; but so long as there was a possibility of its being passed they would not remove it from the Paper.

BELFAST GOVERNMENT BILL.

MR SEXTON (Belfast, W.) wished to ask, if the Government intended or not to exert themselves to pass into law this Session their Bill for the better Government of Belfast?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): That Bill is also blocked.

MR. SEXTON: Does the right hon. Gentleman intend to allow this Bill to remain under the operation of the Blocking Rule?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I cannot help it. The Government could not help it; but so long as there was a possibility of its being passed they would not remove it from the Paper.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—ARRANGEMENT OF PUBLIC BUSINESS.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I entered into an engagement a few days ago with the right hon. Gentleman opposite to state to the House again the Bills which Her Majesty's Government think it necessary to persevere with, and those which they, with very great reluctance, feel compelled to drop. I think it may be well that I should refer to those which they consider it their duty to persevere with under all reasonable circumstances and conditions. The first Bill to which I refer is the Coal Mines Regulation Bill. It is with great regret that I have to remark that that Bill has not yet passed through Committee; but I have every hope that the appeal which I made to hon. Gentlemen who take an interest in that Bill will induce them to remove the new clauses on the Paper, so far as the Committee stage is concerned. The appeal has been seconded by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers), and I believe it is one which has been received with great favour by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Morpeth (Mr. Burt). Under these circumstances, if these new clauses are removed from the Paper so far as the Committee stage is concerned, we can report the Bill to the House this evening; and I hope to arrange for the earliest possible day after progress has been made with Supply, which is absolutely required, for the consideration of the Report on that Bill. It is the strong desire of the Government to pass that Bill. The other Bill which the Government think it necessary to pursue with diligence is the Allotments Bill. We think that that Bill ought to pass into law before the Session is brought to a close. There are two or three comparatively minor measures which are of great administrative importance. There is the Local Government Boundaries Bill, in order to establish the Commission to set out the boundaries which will be included in any Local Government Bill next year, and which will greatly facilitate the progress of legislation next year for that purpose. I trust that the House will pass that Bill without any discussion or delay, for no political principle whatever is involved in it. Right hon. Gentlemen who have experience of the conduct of Public Business will, I am sure, confirm the expression of opinion I have given. There is one other small measure—a measure promoted by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary (Mr. Matthews)—with regard to the police of the Metropolis. That is to redeem and carry out an engagement made by the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary in the last Government. A great loss will be experienced to the Public Service unless that Bill is passed in the course of the present year. But it is one which, of course, could not be passed if it meets with any very serious opposition. The public interest will, however, be served largely if it is passed. There are three Scotch measures which we urgently desire to pass—the Lunacy Districts Bill, the Sheriff of Lanarkshire Bill, and the Secretary for Scotland Bill. I propose, as soon as Supply will enable me to make an arrangement for that purpose, to put down these Bills on a day on which Scotch Supply will be taken, so as to have another Scotch day. There are one or two other small matters to which I need not allude, and which are simply local and administrative. The first of the Bills which we are, with great regret, compelled to sacrifice is the Tithe Rent-Charge Bill, with which we part with very great regret, having regard to the serious condition of affairs in different parts of the country. We are responsible for the peace of the United Kingdom; and we are, therefore, at liberty, and we are bound to express regret that we are compelled by the state of Public Business, and by the great delay which has occurred in the conduct of Public Business, to part with a measure which we believe would have tended greatly to advance the best interests of the country. It has been represented to me that a modification of that Bill might have been accepted by the House, or that a Bill for a short period might have been accepted. But after very careful consideration of the question from every point of view, I came to the conclusion that a Bill for one or two years, or even a Bill for the modification of the existing system of the collection of tithe rent-charge, would have met with greater opposition in this House than we could have encountered in the last days of August. Under these circumstances, we part with the Bill this year with very great regret. There is also another Bill which I am obliged to surrender, and which I do so on other grounds with great regret, and that is the Technical Education Bill. We hoped that that Bill would have been received almost unanimously by the House, but it has met with opposition, and we are threatened with prolonged discussion of the measure, and on the 18th of August I cannot encounter the difficulties which are likely to be thrown in the way if we persist in the carrying through of that Bill in the course of the present Session. It is, however, a measure which we should feel it our duty to introduce in the very earliest days of the next Session, and I hope that the consideration which will be given to the subject in the interval will enable us to meet any objections raised by my hon. Friends on this side of the House, and by hon. Gentlemen on the other side, so as to produce a measure which will rapidly obtain the concurrence of the House without exciting any Party feeling of any kind whatever, for I should greatly deprecate any Party or sectional feeling on a question of this kind. Then there is another Bill which the Chancellor of the Exchequer has introduced, which we also feel that we must sacrifice. This is a Bill which I think does not merit the disapprobation with which it has been received from all quarters of the House. It was intended to facilitate the collection of public revenue, and to remedy evils which undoubtedly exist in that collection. But again, I say, on the 18th of August it is impossible for us to insist on passing a number of Bills into law when we have 116 Votes in Supply to obtain before this Session can be closed. I have every reason to believe that a more careful study of the provisions of this Bill will reconcile a great many hon. Gentlemen, and a great many gentlemen outside this House, to the provisions of this measure, which have occasioned alarm and consternation, not at all, in my judgment, warranted by the actual arrangements in the Bill itself. There are certain Consolidation Bills which I hoped, as improvements of the law, would have been accepted by the House without much consideration. There is the County Courts Act Consolidation Bill; but I am informed by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wolverhampton (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) that that would meet with some opposition. Then the Sheriffs Consolidation Bill and the Coroners Bill must also be surrendered to the exigencies of the case. There is an Irish Bill which we must also sacrifice—the Royal Irish Constabulary Bill. [*Home Rule cheers.*] I am glad to say anything that will give satisfaction to any Party in the House; but it is no source of satisfaction to me that I am compelled to make this announcement under circumstances of great and unusual pressure. I do not think it is necessary for me to refer to other measures of minor importance which stand on the Order Paper, and which ought not to occupy more than a few minutes for consideration. One little measure, called the Charity Commission Officers Bill, is to carry out the Report of the Committee which sat last year and the year before, and to make economical arrangements with regard to the Charity Commission Office. I hope that the House will accept this Bill. It will bring about a great reduction in the public charge, and it will add greatly to the efficiency of an important Department of the Public Service. There is also the Superannuation Bill and the Appellate Jurisdiction Bill which have passed the House of Lords, which I hope will be accepted by the House. But we leave them on the Paper in the hope that the House will be able to deal with them. They are measures which are for the advantage of the country and for the Public Service, and they involve, as far as I can see, no Party questions whatever: And now I must refer to the course of Business. I undertook last week, in answer to an appeal made by the hon. Gentleman opposite, to put down the Diplomatic Vote for the first day after the Mines Bill had passed through Committee. The Mines Bill has, unfortunately, not passed through Committee, and I am not able to say at the present moment what will be the result of the appeal I have made to hon. Members on the subject. I think it would be very much to the convenience of the House to proceed with the Allotments Bill on Friday, and to take the Diplomatic Vote in Supply on the first occasion after the Allotments Bill has passed through Committee, and then I trust we may be able to proceed with Supply and make distinct progress with it. On this subject, I wish to state to the House that we have had 23 nights in Supply this year; the total number in 1885 was 23, and the total number in 1886—including two Sessions of Parliament—was 25. I think I have said enough by merely giving these figures to satisfy the House that the time has arrived when it is most essential, in the interests of the House and the country, that we should make reasonable progress with Supply, and that the Session should not be unduly prolonged.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby): I wish to say only a very few words with regard to the statement of the right hon. Gentleman. I believe the announcement of the right hon. Gentleman has made with reference to the principal Bills he desires to proceed with will receive the unanimous assent of the House. Everybody desires to see the Mines Bill and the Allotments Bill pass. I also think what the right hon. Gentleman has said with regard to the Boundary Commission Bill is reasonable, because an examination of the boundaries is an essential preliminary to the measure of local government reform we are promised next year. To the Police Bill also, no objection would be raised. As to the Scotch Bills, I do not feel very competent to express an opinion, but the Scotch Members may have something to say about them. The right hon. Gentleman said there was one Irish Bill he was going to drop; but there is another Irish Bill which we have heard a great deal about. I will not call it "Coercion Bill, No. 2," because the right hon. Gentleman objects to that term, but the Supplementary Coercion Bill. I should like to hear that there is a prospect of that Bill being among the dropped measures. With respect to the Revenue Bill, I am not one of those who share the prejudices, as I think them, which are held on the subject. But the right hon. Gentleman must remember that the difficulties with which this Bill is met are very much of his own making. Some years ago he led a violent opposition to a similar Bill; and if this Bill suffers, it will not be from the action of any hon. Member, but of the right hon. Gentleman himself. As to the arrangement proposed for the Allotments Bill, I think, as Members are here in considerable numbers, it would probably be the most convenient course that it should be taken to-morrow.

MR. MASON (Lanark, Mid) said, he wished to appeal to the First Lord of Treasury with regard to the Technical Schools (Scotland) Bill. The difficulties which he understood had arisen in connection with the English Bill did not apply to the Scotch Bill, which had been received with great favour. Now that it had received a second reading he would suggest that it might be allowed to remain on the Paper so as to give it a chance of passing. He believed the Committee stage would not occupy more than an hour.

MR. H. GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden) asked the First Lord of the Treasury to take into consideration the advisability of appointing a Royal Commission to inquire into the question of the commutation and redemption of tithes during the Recess, with a view to legislation next Session?

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) asked, in what order Supply would be taken after the Diplomatic Vote?

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.) asked whether the right hon. Gentleman would not take the English Votes in Supply now that the English Members were present and postpone the Irish Votes. He should like a definite intimation as to when the Irish Votes would be taken?

MR. S. SMITH (Flintshire) asked whether any indication could be given as to the time when the Indian Budget would come on?

Mr. PROVAND (Glasgow, Blackfriars, &c.) inquired whether the right hon. Gentleman could not put down the Technical Schools (Scotland) Bill among the Scotch Bills which were to be taken?

Mr. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley) asked whether the Allotments Bill would be the first order to-morrow?

Mr. STAVELEY HILL (Staffordshire, Kingswinford) asked on what day after to-morrow it was proposed to take the Allotments Bill?

Mr. BAIRD (Glasgow, Central) asked, seeing that the School Board elections in Scotland took place early next year, whether the right hon. Gentleman could not take the Technical Schools (Scotland) Bill in place of the Secretary for Scotland Bill?

Mr. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.) said, he understood the Allotments Bill would be taken to-morrow, but when would the Diplomatic and Consular Vote be taken? Nothing that had been said from the Front Opposition Bench favoured its postponement beyond to-morrow.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) asked whether it was not time that the First Lord of the Treasury should introduce the Bill he had promised to provide the right hon. and gallant Member for the Isle of Thanet (Colonel King-Harman) with his salary?

Mr. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.) hoped the right hon. Gentleman would reconsider his determination to sacrifice the Technical Instruction Bill as it had created great interest in manufacturing districts. The opposition to the measure came chiefly from the other side of the House among the right hon. Gentleman's own followers.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) inquired whether if the Allotments Bill was to go forward the right hon. Gentleman could not introduce something of a corresponding nature for Scotland. He wished also to know whether the Government intended to adhere to the order in which the Votes were placed?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: I have been asked as to the order of the Votes. I think it would be for the convenience of the House to proceed with the Votes generally in the order in which they stand on the Paper. I will endeavour to give the earliest possible intimation to hon. Members below the Gangway—if possible, 48 hours' Notice—as to the time when the Irish Votes will be taken. I have been challenged as to the Technical Education (Scotland) Bill. If it is the wish of hon. Members from Scotland that that Measure should remain on the Order Book, I certainly shall not remove it, but I must reserve to myself time for a little consideration as to whether it can be proceeded with. I will endeavour as far as possible to meet the wishes of hon. Members. I have been challenged, also, with regard to the Belfast Municicipal Regulation Bill. It is our strong desire to pass this Bill. It is a Government Bill, and it can be passed if time be not wasted. We will do our best, if hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway will help us. With regard to the Indian Budget, the hon. Gentleman will see that I cannot say when it will be taken until progress is made in Supply, and the Government is able to form some idea as to the course of Public Business. But progress in Supply has been so excessively slow that it is impossible to forecast when any particular measure which depends on Supply will be taken. The subject of the tithe commutation is engaging the serious consideration of the Government, but I cannot say more on that question, which involves very serious issues. As to the Bill authorizing the payment of salary to the Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, we wished and intended not only to bring in that Bill this year, but to pass it; but I think it is now too late in the Session. We therefore intend to introduce it in the earliest days of next Session.

Mr. O'KELLY (Roscommon, N.): Will the right hon. Gentleman say—— [*Cries of* "Order!"]

Mr. W. H. SMITH: It is only due to the right hon. and gallant Gentleman who gives his time and his ability to the Public Service that he should be put into the position and recognized by Statute as Assistant Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, and we shall certainly lose no time in taking the steps necessary for carrying out that arrangement. I think I have now answered all the Questions addressed to me.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: There is one Question I should like to ask. We certainly understood that the position of the Parliamentary Under Secretary was to be formally brought under the notice of the House of Commons so that it should be discussed. The right hon. Gentleman pleads time as a reason for not bringing forward that measure, but I would like to ask him whether during the Recess the right hon. and gallant Member for the Isle of Thanet is going to perform executive duties in Ireland; because, to my mind, that opens a very grave Constitutional question. [*Ministerial cries of* "Oh, oh! *and* Order!"] If Gentlemen opposite put me to it I shall be obliged to move the adjournment of the House. [*Laughter.*] I am quite sure, in spite of the civil laughter of Gentlemen opposite, that I am consulting the convenience of the House in the course which I am taking.

Mr. W. H. SMITH: I am sorry to interrupt the right hon. Gentleman because I fully admit the importance of the question which he has raised, but if he will be so kind as to repeat his question to-morrow I shall be prepared to give a full answer, which I think will save the necessity of any further discussion upon the matter.

Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central) asked whether it was intended to complete the Civil Service Estimates before the remaining Votes for the Army and Navy were taken?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: I must consider the exigencies of Supply. It may be necessary that certain Army and Navy Votes may have to be intervened in the Civil Service Votes, but it is the desire of the Government to go on with the Votes in the order in which they stand upon the Paper.

Mr. O'KELLY asked whether it was the intention of the Government to make the Bill providing for the salary of the Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland retrospective or not?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: I thought the hon. Gentleman would have been aware that such legislation was never retrospective.

Mr. J. C. BOLTON (Stirling) asked whether Scotch Business would be taken next week?

Mr. STAVELEY HILL asked what would be the order of Business for to-morrow?

Mr. WADDY (Lincolnshire, Brigg) asked when the Law of Evidence Bill would be taken?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: I hope that the Law of Evidence Bill will be generally accepted by the House, as I believe that it is a great improvement in the law, and almost all lawyers are of that opinion. With regard to the question of the hon. and learned Member behind me, I really hope that the Allotments Bill would be finished in one night. I am afraid that I am not in a position to say when the Scotch Votes and Bills will be taken, but I will give 24 hours' Notice of the intention of the Government to bring them on. As regards Supply I will endeavour to take the Diplomatic Vote on either Saturday or Monday, but I will see how Public Business proceeds to-morrow. I have fully considered the question of the hon. Member with regard to the Scotch Technical Education Bill, but I am afraid that I cannot undertake to proceed with that measure having regard to the period of the Session at which we have arrived.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

IRISH LAND LAW BILL [*Lords*].

[Bill 371.]

(*Mr. A. J. Balfour.*)

CONSIDERATION OF POSTPONED LORDS' AMENDMENTS.

Order for Consideration of Postponed Amendments made by the Lords to the Commons Amendments and Lords Reason read.

Lords Reason for disagreeing to the Amendment made by the Commons in page 6, line 21, *considered.*

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. A. J. Balfour) Manchester, E.), in moving that the Commons do not insist upon their Amendment, said, it would be in the recollection of the House that one of the fundamental and elementary principles of the legislation of 1881 was to withdraw from the operation of the provisions of the Act of that year, which gave fixity of tenure and right of free sale to the tenant, all accommodation land in the neighbourhood of towns. That principle of the Act of 1881 was also the principle of the clause which the Government introduced into the Bill, and the sole reason that they introduced it rested upon the fact not that they disagreed with the legislation of 1881, or for the purpose of revising it, but that that principle had been more or less departed from in practice through certain technical difficulties as to what constituted town parks under the interpretation put upon the Act of 1881 by the Land Commission. The Government therefore proposed by the clause which they inserted in the Bill to free the Land Commissioners from certain restrictions and definitions fixed by the Act of 1881, and to permit them to exercise an equitable jurisdiction as to what was, or what was not, a town park, and as to what should, or should not, be withdrawn from the provisions relating to fixity of tenure or free sale of the Act of 1881. That being the principle of the clause, after a certain amount of discussion had taken place in that House, an arbitrary limit was introduced into the clause, making the Land Act of 1881 apply only to town parks in the neighbourhood of towns having less than 2,000 inhabitants. The limit had been struck out by the House of Lords, and the question was whether the House would assent to the Amendment, or whether they would adhere to that arbitrary limit, and carry still further the controversy with the other House of Parliament. What was the justification for the introduction of this provision? and what did it do? Why, by adhering to this limit of 2,000 they would be transferring a large amount of property from one set of owners to another. There was nothing, in his opinion, which rendered it necessary to apply the principles of free sale and fixity of tenure to accommodation land. Before the Act of 1881, tenant-right did not exist in town parks. [*Cries of* "Yes, it did!" *from several Irish Members.*]

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) said, that it had existed before that Act; and, in fact, had always existed.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said, it was his belief that, in practice, tenant-right had never existed with regard to accommodation lands near towns; and he was informed that such was the case by gentlemen who were far better acquainted with Ulster than he was. In towns under a population of 2,000, the property of the town parks had always been vested solely in the landlord, and they now proposed to transfer part of it to the tenants. The tenants of town parks, under the clause as it stood, could get full compensation for their improvements, and there was no grievance to complain of on account of the Amendment which had been introduced by the other House. Although the clause, as it stood when it left that House, would injure the landlords whilst it conferred benefits on tenants of town parks, that was not his principal ground of objection to this limit of 2,000. His objection was that they did serious injury to those persons who did not now possess accommodation land, but who would in future desire to possess it. Those were the class of persons they would injure, and by injuring them they would injure the towns in which they lived. Under the proposal, the class of persons to be benefited would be the present individuals who happened to hold town park lands; while the classes who would be injured by it would be the landlords, those who succeeded the present holders of the lands, and the towns themselves, which would be deprived of the building land in their neighbourhood necessary to provide for the future increase in their population. He was aware that the number of such towns in Ireland was not very great. For that the condition of disorder and insecurity that had unhappily so long existed in Ireland was largely responsible. Though the majority of the small towns of Ireland were not towns to whose future growth one could look forward with much confidence, there were some towns, having now a population under 2,000, which had a better outlook before them. The future of those towns would be seriously injured if the accommodation land adjoining them, which might otherwise be devoted to building purposes, was alienated. But another point to be borne in mind was this—that this Amendment would transfer to the tenant of accommodation land the benefit that ought really to belong to the landlord. The result would be to put it in the power of an individual who might hereafter have no connection with the town at all, of holding land which ought to be accommodation land for the residents of the town, and it would transfer to him the increased value of the land due to the prosperity and extension of the town. Why in such a case should this increased value be transferred from the landlord to the person who rented the land? What possible right or claim had such a person as this to the increased value of the holding, which arose by no industry whatever of his? It was the landlord, if anyone, who was entitled to benefit by such increase in the value of the land. He freely recognized that the great majority of the Representatives from Ireland, representing, as he presumed, the balance of pressure brought to bear upon them by their constituents, were strongly of opinion that the Amendment inserted in that House ought to be retained. He did not deny that it was their duty to represent the views of their constituents, but he, however, appealed to the House at large to say whether that was not one of those questions in which, in the interests of those who were not then town-park occupiers and of those who were not yet born, the House at large should act as umpire, and see that permanent justice is done. There was always a danger that where a change was strongly desired by a certain class, the Representatives of that class should press their views upon the House, as if only those views were deserving of consideration. But the House had to consider not merely one class of the community, but had to see that no principles were carried into effect in regard to property in land in Ireland which might have an injurious effect on future generations. It was in the exercise of this high function that he asked the House to accept the Lords' Amendment. It was quite true that the Amendment which the Lords' Amendment proposed to strike out had in Committee on this Bill been accepted by himself, on behalf of the Government in the House of Commons as a matter of compromise. ["Hear, hear!"] That was quite true; but when Gentlemen opposite cheered, they must admit—indeed, he took it as an indication that they regarded the principle of compromise as being one that might very legitimately govern the action of Parliament as between Party and Party, and as between one House and the other. He apprehended that that was a very sound principle, and he would ask the House to consider the history of that measure. It must be remembered by hon. Members that it had been very much modified, for the House of Commons had struck out two clauses from the Bill which were regarded as of great value by noble Lords in "another place," and had refused to agree to their reinstatement—he referred to the clause dealing with the Court of Appeal and the clause dealing with rating—and there were many other instances in which the House of Commons had refused to accept the Bill as it came down from the House of Lords. The House of Commons, therefore, had altered the Bill which came down from the House of Lords and had insisted on many alterations, and it appeared to him that if that spirit of compromise was to be carried out as it ought to be, irrespective of the merits of the question to which he had already referred, and which he believed were quite convincing, the House of Commons would do well to accept this Amendment of the House of Lords, and he accordingly moved that the House do agree with the Amendment of the House of Lords.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House doth not insist on their Amendment to which the Lords have disagreed."—(*Mr. A. J. Balfour.*)

Mr. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.) said, he had listened with considerable surprise to the arguments which the right hon. Gentleman had, for the first time, put forward to defend himself from—it might not be a breach of faith, but a backing out of a compromise entered into with the House. The principle on which the right hon. Gentleman had proceeded, and the grounds on which he now sought to sustain the Government in agreeing with the Amendments of the House of Lords was, that a town park, as understood in Ireland, was accommodation land, that it had been taken by the tenant on a special contract; that there was no interest in it; that it was absolutely the case of the stranger coming into a place and bargaining with the owner to so take the land. But that was a complete fallacy. He (Mr. O'Doherty) did not know what might be the case with regard to the other Provinces in Ireland; but he could say, and he spoke from experience, that in the Province of Ulster there never was a proposition more false in fact than to say that tenant-right did not exist in town parks. It was a monstrous statement to make, either in that House or in "another place," and especially monstrous to be made in the other House by a former Member for Ulster, who must have known in the very county from which he came the decision of the Land Court, deciding under the Land Act of 1870, that though the practice of tenant-right did exist in regard to town parks, yet by the definitions of the Act of 1870 it was not legalized by that Act. There never was a statement made by a Minister in that House which so clearly proved the necessity of discussing these things in their own country, where the statement could be contradicted and the monstrous assertions howled down. The Chief Secretary had stated that the principle of the Land Act of 1881 was that where tenants had property in their land in consequence of the practice in Ireland of screwing out rent by notices to quit, the Land Act of 1881 became necessary. That was the very same principle which the Government proposed now by introducing to the benefits of the Land Act the leaseholders who were excluded by the Land Act of 1881, and the principle upon which they had so acted was because the leaseholders had property to be protected like any other class of tenants. What was the fact with regard to legal interests? What was the interest of the tenant in a town park in Ireland? In the first place, by law he was presumed to have made all improvements; by law he was bound to get every penny he paid for his good-will; and yet the Chief Secretary had the boldness to state that tenant-right did not apply to those tenants. What was the meaning of the Act? What was the meaning of saying that tenant-right must be paid, if he was disturbed? Not only was this right recognized under the 5th and 7th sections of the Act, but Section 4 applied in a fuller manner to town parks than what it applied in the case of leaseholders. By some unfortunate oversight in the Act of 1870, while the tenant's interest in a town park was recognized, and it was provided he should have the benefit of the money which he paid, and the improvements which he made, it neglected to legalize the tenant-right usage which always prevailed with regard to it and similar usages. With regard to Ulster, a case was decided in Ireland that although a town park had a tenant-right usage by the usage of the estate, yet the provisions of the Act of 1870 excluded them from compensation as to tenant-right. Then, there started an agitation among the people of Ulster, but he did not intend to speak of that now. When the Land Question became urgent and when the Land Act of 1881 was introduced, the grievances of the holders of town parks was most strongly impressed upon the Government and Members of Parliament. He did not think it necessary to follow the right hon. Gentleman all through his argument, which was based on a false assumption. The right hon. Gentleman said that where land was taken as accommodation land only by a person living in a town under a free contract for the accommodation of his land or trade, he should have no interest to come in under the Act of 1881; and he (Mr. O'Doherty) confessed he could not see any right of a man who had not his tenant right in it, to claim to have the benefit of the Act of 1881. But their legislation did not carry out that principle, and their Judges took care they would not apply that principle of justice. The way in which this question had always been treated was this—the Land Courts had decided that they would not look whether the tenant had an interest or not, but simply see whether it was accommodation land. In the case of the town parks there had clearly been a confiscation of the tenant's property, and a transference of it to the landlord. He was aware that there were in Ulster 20,000 people who possessed 5,000 town parks on which they and their forefathers had spent millions, and which would lie at the mercy of the landlords. When these people came to know—as the Irish Members would take care to tell them—that the landlords were using the Union to rob them, a different feeling would very soon prevail in Ulster from that which now prevailed with regard to the Union. It was said, too, that these lands were held almost entirely by shopkeepers. Who were the shopkeepers? Many of them held miserable shops in towns, and as the market day was the only day in the week they did a little business, they spent the other five days of the week on their farms. In England, a town grew up from the necessities of the surrounding district; but in Ulster, the people settled in towns and spread the agriculture from the towns. He wished the House to understand clearly what he meant by a town park and what he desired to have protected. He desired to have protected any parcel of land which had been taken like all the farms in the country, and which had been used and had paid taxes like all the rest of the land in the country. By the Land Act of 1870, the right of the tenant in his property was recognized, and under that Act if his landlord attempted to evict him he was to receive compensation. Then came the Land Act of 1881, and in that there was a very curious point, to which he would call the attention of the House. In that Act town parks were included. The Purchase Clauses applied to town parks, though, it was true, only in the interest of the landlord. Both the law and the facts proved that dual ownership existed in town parks. The proposition the right hon. Gentleman now sought to establish was utterly foreign to all practice. How did the question of town parks stand with reference to this Bill? What were the words of the clause as it appeared in the Bill as originally introduced into the House of Lords? As introduced into the Lords the clause stood thus—

> "A parcel of land shall not be deemed to constitute a town park unless it has been deemed to have been let as accommodation land and not as a farm, and is in other respects within the definition."

But the consideration of the matter in the House of Lords eventuated in a totally different set of words. First of all the words "a parcel of land" were changed into "a holding," and the clause was made to say that a holding should not be deemed to constitute a town park unless it were let and used as an ordinary agricultural farm. The effect of the Amendment was to make the tenant prove that a holding was let and used as an ordinary agricultural farm. But anyone who knew anything of the practice with regard to town parks in Ireland would understand how impossible it was to prove that any particular holding was used as an ordinary agricultural farm. The result of such a provision would be a crop of litigation such as had never been seen before. The Lords had changed the original draft of the Government Bill, and what they appeared to have given in one case, they qualified in another. Even if it were proved that a holding was used as an ordinary farm in the opinion of the Court, it must not interfere substantially with the development of the adjacent town. To whom had they to look for any improvement in the towns? Not to the landlords, for they hated the towns and had never done anything for them, because there they found intelligence and could not exercise their rights oppressively. It was to the tenants they must look for the improvements of the towns if they were protected from robbery and plunder in the interests which they held. The Chief Secretary's idea of a town park was purely English, and was as different from the town parks of Ulster as two things could possibly be. It was a very curious thing that the opposition to the clause in the House of Lords came from Ulster, and when the people of Ulster, or the section of the people of Ulster—whose only opposition to Home Rule was because of a dread that under it the Pope would come over and take possession of Ireland—when these people came to know what the Union really meant—and no effort would be spared to let them know what it meant—a change would come over Ulster. In his (Mr. O'Doherty's) opinion this question of town parks raised a more vital issue than the question of the enfranchisement of the leaseholders. The leaseholders were protected by their leases, the landlords could not evict them or raise their rents; but the landlords could raise the rents on occupiers of town parks or evict them. Their interest in their holdings had been recognized over and over again, and even in the Report of the Devon Commission it was shown that the tenant right existed in town parks as part of the general custom of Ulster. Speaking as an Ulster Member, he declared that there never was a matter which so stirred the people of Ulster as this question of town parks. It would be fought out to the death, and year after year would be made a crucial question in Ulster.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby) said, that considering the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary rose for the purpose of deliberately throwing over the compromise which the Government had entered into, he (Sir William Harcourt) thought the subject might have been introduced in a speech a little less aggressive and a little less exasperating in its tone. The Chief Secretary, not for the first time, had exhibited a most marvellous ignorance with reference to the fundamental basis of the question with which he dealt. The right hon. Gentleman was endeavouring to settle the Land Question in Ireland, but he did not know the A B C of the question. Anyone who had paid the slightest attention to the question of Irish land would never have laid down that which the right hon. Gentleman had affirmed to be a self-evident proposition—that there never had been any tenant right in respect of town parks in Ireland. That statement of the Chief Secretary met with a chorus of exclamations from everyone in the House who knew anything about Ireland; but what could they do with a Government who undertook to deal with Ireland in this state of crass ignorance of everything with which they were proposing to handle? The idea that there was no such a thing as tenant right in town parks must be dispelled. [Mr. T. W. RUSSELL: Hear, hear!] The other day he had got a letter from the elected Guardians of the Ballycastle Division of Ballycastle Union, County Antrim, representing 100 tenants of town parks in the suburbs of that town, drawing attention to the grievances which these people would suffer owing to the action of the Lords. The town or village, they said, had a population of about 1,400, so it was outside the limit fixed by the Lords. The parks or fields had been sold from time to time and bought by their present tenants, or their representatives. In extent they varied from an Irish acre to 30 acres, and tenant right has been paid for them as high as from £30 to £40 per Irish acre. What did the House suppose, he (Sir William Harcourt) asked, the people of Ballycastle thought of their Chief Secretary, who declared they had no tenant right in the lands? They would say probably—"This is the sort of man the Union sends us to Ireland." No wonder the people of Ireland wished for a little more self-government of their own, directed by someone competent to minister to their affairs, and not by men who were ignorant of the elementary conditions under which they lived. The Guardians of Ballycastle went on to say—

> "All the improvements have been made by the tenants, and in no case has the landlord or his predecessor within the memory of man expended a shilling on improvements."

That was pretty much the conduct of the landlords all over Ireland in respect to their properties. [*Cries of* "No, no!" *from the Ministerial Benches.*] Hon. Gentlemen opposite might shout "No, no!" but it nevertheless was the fact, and it was mainly the reason of the present condition of Ireland. The letter then dealt with the subject of rent, and said that the present rents for the holdings in these times were simply ruinous, about 30 per cent over the Government valuation. These town parks had been held in continuous occupation and tenant right had been admitted by the landlords, further declared the gentlemen from Ballycastle. But the Chief Secretary had declared there was no tenant right in these town parks. To use an American expression, "the bottom of the tub had been knocked out," it had disappeared, and he (Sir William Harcourt) wanted to know what the right hon. Gentleman had got to hold water, and for what possible reason were these town parks to be distinguished from the rest of the holdings in respect of the assessment of fair rent? It was said that those town parks might be wanted at some time or another as building land; but if that was the only objection, then they could introduce a power of resumption for the purpose. But everyone knew who knew anything of Ireland that, unfortunately, the land would not be required for the extension of these small towns, and building land was talked of in London for the purpose of throwing dust in the eyes of ignorant legislators. It was one of those frauds and illusions employed for the purpose of defeating justice. That was the purport of the evidence given before the Cowper Commission; and if the Government chose to make a condition of this kind in order to satisfy a supposed necessity, well and good, but he asked them not to refuse justice in respect of a revision of fair rent to these tenants. The Chief Secretary further argued that this was an unheard of proposition, but it was certainly recommended by the Cowper Commission, certainly a landlords' Commission if ever there was one. The Commission said—

> "We recommend that all town park holdings exceeding five statute acres in size joining towns of less than 5,000 inhabitants should be admitted to the fair rent provisions of the Land Act of 1881 subject to the landlord having the power of resumption for building and improve-

ment purposes and on paying compensation for the improvements."

Why did the Government not carry out that proposal? It was obviously fair, and it was all that was asked for. Mr. Litton, one of the Chief Commissioners, who could not be accused of very advanced views, stated in his evidence—

> "I would approve that the town parks rents may be revised by the Commissioners, the landlords to have the power to resume possession any time for building purposes, giving compensation for actual improvements."

Then the Chief Secretary said that the proposal benefited only the existing class of tenants; but they might apply that argument to the whole Act of 1881. Who were the Irish Members that were going to support the Government in assenting to the House of Lords' Amendment? The other day he (Sir William Harcourt) regretted the absence of the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell). He now congratulated the hon. Member on his return from his victorious campaign in Northwich, to which, he understood, the hon. Member largely contributed. He hoped the hon. Gentleman would now spare some time to attend to the interests of Ulster. He should like to hear what the hon. Gentleman had to say to the settlement of the question by the Government? In the course of his speech, the Chief Secretary made use of a rather singular phrase. The right hon. Gentleman said that the Members for Ireland were acting under the balance of pressure from their constituents. He (Sir William Harcourt) did not know whether the remark applied particularly to the hon. Member for South Tyrone. What was this balance? The balance of pressure from the landlords, or the balance of pressure from the tenants? On the whole, he thought the balance of pressure from the tenants might possibly prevail. He thought that was likely, because these were times when the Government had to consider the balance of pressure. But who were the Members from Ireland who were going to support the House of Lords? The hon. Gentleman had boasted the other day that there would not be a town park left in South Tyrone; but the Government had taken that boast out of his mouth. Lord Salisbury had laid down a proposition in the House of Lords—a most unstatesmanlike expression—for he had said the only thing the Government cared about in Ireland was the opinion of Ulster Yes; the Government cared nothing about the majority of the people of Ireland, so long as they satisfied a small section. But what did Ulster now think about the legislation of the Government? How many of the Ulster Members would stand up to support the landlords? He did not even know that the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh (Colonel Saunderson) would support them. They were about to pass a Bill on a most material question, which affected a most material part of the population of Ireland, and they were going to legislate upon it against the unanimous, or all but unanimous, opinion of every part of Ireland. How could they hope to effect a real settlement of the question under those circumstances? Probably the Chancellor of the Exchequer would defend it on some of his high-flowing transcendental principles. He hoped, however, the right hon. Gentleman would permit him to remind him that the Ulster vote was at stake, and that therefore he might find it of importance to sacrifice these transcendental principles. The Ulster men were virtuous men; but like all men they had their price—it was not a high one—it was only the sacrifice of the principles of the Chancellor of the Exchequer; and if that was so, he thought the bargain might be struck. The Chief Secretary had appealed to posterity against the present interests of the holders of town parks. The right hon. Gentleman said that no principle that was deleterious to future generations ought to be admitted into the Bill—that it was the high function of Parliament to exclude principles that were deleterious to future generations. Now, he (Sir William Harcourt) thought that the very basis of the Tory idea of that Bill was that it was full of deleterious principles. The deleterious principles of the Act of 1881 were to be extended, and Lord Salisbury said it would be necessary—

> "To develop or push on those unsound principles in order to attain those elementary objects for which all society existed."

And so they were pushing on those deleterious principles in order to attain the elementary objects for which all society existed. But, if they had got so far as that, it seemed to him that they need not concern themselves about posterity, but should concern themselves a little more about the interests of the holders of town parks. It was quite plain that the holders of town parks had a right to stand in many respects, if not all, exactly on the same footing as the holders of other lands in Ireland. All that they had to do was to secure them an assessment of a fair rent, and they could protect those small towns for which they professed to be so solicitous, by merely having a clause of resumption such as they already had in the Bill in reference to the protection of the interests of towns. Thus they would accomplish an object of simple justice, and do no injustice whatever to those towns. He hoped that the House, acting in accordance with the universal opinion of the Members for Ireland, would reject that Amendment of the Lords, and carry out the compromise into which the Government had entered, but from which they were now endeavouring to depart.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square) said, he should not have risen to take part in that debate, if it had been his duty to follow an Irish Member, without the apprehension of showing some ignorance in regard to the situation of Ireland; but he was under no such apprehension when he followed the right hon. Gentleman who had just sat down. Was it possible to conceive that right hon. Gentleman was one of the principal authors of the Act of 1881?

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: And very ignorant we were then.

MR. GOSCHEN: Ah! "Very ignorant we were," said the right hon. Gentleman.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: We have learned since.

MR. GOSCHEN: And now, sitting on that Bench, he had, it is to be presumed, learned better things; and he had acquired not only a different knowledge of Ireland, but also different conceptions of justice. He (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) failed to see that that which was said to be justice now was not justice when the right hon. Gentleman, in his great ignorance, took part in passing that great Bill which it was now the duty of Her Majesty's Government to amend. Could anyone conceive, from the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, that the clause on which they were now engaged was one for protecting interests which were not protected, but were left alone, by the authors of the Act of 1881?

MR. T. M. HEALY: They gave a promise at the time to attempt legislation.

MR. GOSCHEN: Yes; that was so. They gave a promise in 1881, and it was now 1887. It appeared to him that the redemption of that promise had been somewhat slow. He did not remember that any efforts were made by the right hon. Gentleman opposite and his Friends to redeem their promise before Her Majesty's present Advisers came into Office. But the right hon. Gentleman now got up, when they were dealing with a clause which was actually an amending one, endeavouring to protect interests that were not protected by the previous legislation of the right hon. Gentleman and his Friends, and found fault with it on the ground that it did not go far enough in extending the protection which was given for the first time by this Bill. From some of the observations made one would have thought that by that clause they were forfeiting interests which had already been created—that they were going back and depriving some of the tenants in Ulster, or elsewhere in Ireland, of rights which they had already acquired. The hon. Member for North Donegal (Mr. O'Doherty) had, indeed, spoken as if they were transferring, by means of the clause, millions which belonged to the tenants in Ulster to the landlords. They did not, however, transfer a single farthing. It was not a question of transferring, but of extending new protection, and of how far they should extend it. By the Bill they created no fresh rights in the landlord, they were limiting his rights, and the only fault that was found with them was that they did not limit them enough. The proposal was made that they should so amend the clause as to actually create a dual ownership in regard to town parks, not only in Ulster, but in all the other parts of Ireland where it did not exist. It could not be contended that that alleged right of tenants in town parks, which was supposed by some hon. Members to exist in certain parts of Ireland, really now existed all over Ireland. [An hon. MEMBER: Yes.] The tenants of town parks all over Ireland were protected in the sense that they could claim compensation for their improvements under the Act of 1870. But now some people were proposing to create new rights on behalf of the tenants in large portions of Ireland where they did not exist, and that was done in the name of justice. Justice, he presumed, was not so entirely one-sided as the right hon. Member for Derby would represent it to be; and there was such a thing as protecting the rights which belonged to all classes, as well as the rights of the one class which the right hon. Member for Derby now —if not in 1881 — took under his special protection. The right hon. Gentleman had not dealt with the argument which came from many persons in Ireland—namely, that the inhabitants of many of these towns desired to have the free use of that accommodation land, and did not want it to be stereotyped as agricultural holdings. The right hon. Gentleman spoke of its not being frequently required for building purposes, although, in some towns, it might and probably would be so required; but he did not touch the argument that the free use of the land was not only valuable to the landlord, but also to the community which was concerned. Agricultural tenants might be in the majority; but there was a minority in the towns who were interested—as had been so clearly explained by the Chief Secretary—in maintaining the freedom of the land around the town. The interests of those people, however, it seemed, were to be disregarded, and consideration was only to be given to the interests of the tenants who were for the moment in possession of accommodation land. It was not advancing Liberal principles to hold that there were no others to be considered except the particular tenants now in occupation of that land. In this case it was not, as in the general case of agricultural holdings, a question simply between the owner and the tenant, but it was a question between the owner and the tenant and the community at large, and those who required accommodation land around towns. There was one consideration which might commend itself to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby, and that was—where there was a question of sub-letting, were they going to give the present tenants all those rights, if they transferred the property from the landlord to them, without any security whatever to the inhabitants of the town generally? He did not wish to discuss the matter at any length; it was a subject which he admitted should rather be discussed by the Attorney General for Ireland. He had, however, ventured to intervene after the speech of his right hon. Friend (Sir William Harcourt), whose notions of justice had changed as much since the year 1881 as his knowledge appeared to have remained stationary.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) said, he had referred to *Hansard's* Reports, and he contended that in 1881 the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) would have accepted a similar clause but for Mr. W. Shaw. If the House agreed with the Lords' Amendment, he would like to move, if in Order, that at least one of the provisions of the Land Act of 1881, the fair rent provision, should apply to town parks, and this Amendment, if he were permitted to move it, would exhibit the hypocrisy of the Government. He had always thought it was a good way for a Government to get a Bill through Committee to accept all the Amendments, and then have them chucked out in the Lords. The Government had treated the Irish Members while the Bill was in Committee with an absolute want of candour. The Irish Members postponed discussion on this question of town parks owing to the concession of the Government. A Member could speak as often as he liked, and move as many Amendments as he liked in Committee; but in order to get the Bill through Committee the Government accepted an Amendment. They then got the Amendment struck out in the Lords. The Bill was then sent down to the Commons, with the Speaker in the Chair, when a Member could only speak once, and was pinned to the particular point on which the Lords disagreed. He could say that the Bill had been Balfoured. The Chief Secretary had invented a new mode of procedure in legislation. The Government seemed to think that the question of free sale was the important question involved in this matter. But hon. Members from Ireland did not give a button for this free sale—what they wanted was to be allowed to stop in their holdings. The Common Law gave them free sale. The free sale of the Act of 1881 was a mockery, a sham, and an encroachment on the rights of the tenants, and he denounced it as such at the time. What they wanted was a fair rent. The Government pretended to be anxious for the development of Irish towns. This was a miserable hypocrisy. The pretences in the House of Lords they all knew were miserable hypocrises, because towns in Ireland, instead of growing, were shrinking. There was a decrease of population equal to the population of Birmingham —if he might use the sacred name— every year in Ireland. Probably when English Gentlemen heard the term "town park" they thought of something like the Rosherville Gardens, or some magnificent demesne. But what was the fact? An Irish town was a miserable, decaying place, with a row of houses without any thatch, the people invisible, and the only inhabitant seen being a duck, a goose, or pig. That was one of their towns. The park was a potato ridge, the property of some unfortunate man, unable to live by a shop, which brought him a profit of about 3*s.* a-week. These were the so-called shopkeepers—miserable hucksters he called them, for they were nothing else—and yet it was sought to prevent them having the benefit of a fair rent on the pretence that the towns were hidebound, whereas in most of them there was room for hundreds or thousands of houses. Bad as was the law of 1881, it would be almost perfect if it were not for the way in which the Courts had acted. He defied anyone to say what a town park was. The Land Commissioners did not know, and almost every appeal had produced a fresh definition. The truth was the adoption of the term town park was a mere dodge on the part of landlords to get out of having fair rents fixed. The term was never heard in Ireland until the Land Act, and immediately every landlord had innumerable town parks on his estate. The landlord who had the most town parks was a brother of a Cabinet Minister, the Marquess of Abercorn, who almost called the space around the town pump of Strabane a town park. It was a false pretence that this legislation about town parks was in the interests of the towns, for which the landlords did not really care. He would not mind if they robbed them without hypocrisy; but what made the blood boil was to hear the Government say they did it in the interest of the tenants. In Lismore, his (Mr. T. M. Healy's) father requiring to build a house could not get a lease for more than 81 years, and in the town of Bantry, the lord of the soil would not give land to build a gas works on which to illuminate the town. They did not want free sale in this matter. All that the landlords did for the towns was to rob them; and it was a hideous and hypocritical pretence that town park lands were to be treated exceptionally for the benefit of the towns. With a view to testing the *bona fides* of the Government in this matter, he desired to know whether he would be in Order in moving a provision that Section 8 of the Land Act should be held to apply to such holdings with this modification—that the landlord might at any time during the continuance of the statutory term resume possession of the holding?

MR. SPEAKER said, that the Amendment would raise a separate question which might be entertained when the House had decided whether it would agree with the Lords' Amendment.

MR. SERJEANT MADDEN (Dublin University) said, that most of the speeches which had been made on the opposite side of the House had been addressed to the exclusion of town parks from the Act of 1881 rather than to the exclusion of town parks with a smaller population than 2,000 from the present Bill; but whether they passed this Bill as it left that House, or as it came back to it, the legislation of 1881 with respect to town parks would remain. Still he thought hon. Gentlemen opposite were quite right in arguing the question as they had done; because the only argument in favour of the 2,000 limit was, that the legislation of 1881 with respect to town parks was radically wrong and should be minimized as much as possible. That showed how far the argument on the other side went, and as the point had been raised he must say a few words upon it. Now, in order that the Court can hold land to be a town park, the Court must come to the conclusion that the land adjoins, or is near, a city or town, and that it bears increased value as accommodation land. The first question, therefore, that the Court has under the present law to decide was, whether the collection of houses which the land adjoined was a town within the meaning of the Act. On that point, he found there was a series of decisions from which it appeared that 764 had, by judicial decision, been adopted as the lowest population that would induce the Court to hold that a particular collection of houses was a town within the Act.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT said, that Mr. Justice O'Hagan, in his evidence before the Cowper Commission, said that places with a population of only 500 or 600 inhabitants had been determined to be towns.

Mr. Serjeant MADDEN said, that might be so; but the authority to which he had referred gave 764 as the lowest limit. However, that did not affect his argument. Whatever might be the previous decisions of the Court as to the collection of houses which would constitute a town for the purpose of making land adjoining a town park, it was now said that these decisions were not to be acted upon, that a new line was to be arbitrarily drawn, and that nothing was to be considered a town if the population was under 2,000. What was the sense or justice of that? This was an important question; because having looked through the list of towns having populations between 764 and 2,000 in *Thom's Irish Almanac*, he found that there were 124 such towns. He asked if the land near a collection of houses, such as, before this Bill, the Court considered to be a town within the meaning of the Act of 1881 were held to be accommodation land what was the sense or justice of drawing a different line? He could understand the position of hon. Gentlemen opposite, who would have all town parks included in the Act of 1881; but what he could not understand was why, if they adopted the principle on which that Act proceeded with respect to town parks, they should now adopt the arbitrary limit of a population of 2,000 in the present Bill? What was the principle of the exclusion of town parks? As he understood it, this was not a tenant farmer's question at all. [*Cries of* "It is."] He would explain why he thought it was not. They had heard a great deal about the question, and so far as it could equitably be done, he agreed that it was desirable to root the tenant farmers in the soil, but why should they root the baker or the butcher of a town in his potato garden? He lived in the town. He was not a tenant farmer, and he did not inhabit his holding. It had been said that town parks came within the operation of tenant right, and that the tenants were entitled to compensation for improvements under the Act of 1870. Be it so. The more rights they already possessed the less claim they had for the extension of their rights, or to be included in the present Bill. These town parks were used for the accommodation of the inhabitants of the town, who thereby got hay and grass for their cattle and ground for their potatoes. What would be the effect of admitting the present tenants of these holdings to the benefit of the Act of 1881? You would by this means enrich them. But you would not enrich the class intended to be benefited by the Act of 1881. But what would be the effect on other classes? Could it be imagined that if the tenants of this accommodation land were admitted to the benefit of the Act of 1881, that the inhabitants of the towns would have the accommodation they needed at a lower rate for the future? He believd that the tenants of town parks were just the class who would consider that anything which they could extract from the inhabitants of the town was no more than a reasonable remuneration for them. The effect of such legislation as hon. Members opposite desired in replacing the limit of 2,000, would be to create in these small towns a class of middlemen, for these town park holders could and would sub-let the land for grazing or conacre. It would also place round the towns a circle of perpetuity owners, each one of whom would have to be dealt with whenever new buildings were wanted for the extension of the town. The effect of this would, he thought, be most unfortunate; and he believed that it was a sound principle on which the Legislature excluded from the Act of 1881 the tenants of town parks, who merely held their land for the accommodation of their houses in the towns. If a holding was a farm in any sense of the term which would entitle its tenant fairly and equitably to come under the Act of 1881, it must be remembered that such a tenant would be condition of the country for which, of course, they were largely responsible, appreciated the Amendment, and having operated successfully in Ireland, considered a town of 500 inhabitants as a quite respectable and large town. Was it not a monstrous perversion of terms to call a place of 1,000 or 2,000 inhabitants town or city? He was perfectly convinced when the Committee debated the matter in 1881, it never entered their minds that the words "town" or "city" would be applied to a collection of houses of that size, and it never occurred to them that the Commissioners would so fix the limit. It was not until the Commissioners fixed the limit at 764, a rather singular limit, that the question became a burning one, and a very strong and bitter agitation rose in Ireland. The Chief Secretary had said a deal about the injustice proposed to be done by transferring the property of the landlords to the tenants. He had received a letter from a gentleman in Ballycastle, County Antrim, which stated

> "All the town park holders of this town have paid a large price per acre for their town parks—in many instances as much as £40 an acre. They were obliged 20 years ago to take out leases, and the leases expire in the month of November, 1888."

That was a pretty state of things, and undoubtedly the landlord, if he was impecunious, and the rents of his ordinary farms had been reduced, would proceed next November twelve months to levy off the shopkeepers of Ballycastle some recompense for the loss he had sustained in other parts of his estate. He was perfectly certain, from his knowledge of the general customs of town park holders, that this £40 per acre did not represent all they had laid out, and consequently it would be in the power of the landlord to rob them of this £40 per acre, if some such protection as that which they had introduced in the Commons were not allowed to remain in the Act. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary had absurdly argued that the increase in the value of the land would go to a tenant when a town did not expand; but what they wanted to do was to protect tenants from robbery and oppression. He must confess he was surprised to see the attitude adopted by hon. Members from Ulster in reference to this matter. He knew from correspondence which came to him from Ulster that the action of the Ulster Representatives in this matter did not meet with the approval of their constituents. They would soon have an opportunity of consulting the town park holders and the townsmen of Ulster on this question, and he ventured to say there was no part of Ireland in which there would be seen more bitter disappointment and stronger agitation on this question than in the Province of Ulster; and if they consented to this Amendment by the Lords, they were only preparing for themselves annoyance and trouble in coming Sessions, for this question would appear again and again in the shape of Bills and Motions, until some measure of justice was provided for the town park holders of Ireland.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary, in closing his speech, made what I think a rather ungenerous charge both against the Representatives of Ulster and against the people of Ulster. The right hon. Gentleman said that we represent the pressure of certain parts of the country, and that the House ought to stand as umpire between the Members and the pressure of their constituents. That was a polite way of saying that the Irish town park holders were anxious to rob the landlords of what they called property, and that the Ulster Members were mean enough to stand by and help them in doing it. I do not think that is much of a compliment, either to the Ulster Members or the Ulster people. If I thought this was an effort on the part of the tenant farmer to rob his landlord, I should resist it. I am not sure that it is not the other way round; but I am quite free to make a confession in this matter. The County Tyrone has been described by one hon. Member as the heart of this town park difficulty. I dare say it is. I am free to acknowledge that the pressure of this town park question has been felt, perhaps, more in that county than in any other part. But, notwithstanding that, I am not going to argue this question as if it had but one side. It has two sides, and I have had to choose between the two. I entirely agree with the Chief Secretary that, as the Bill stood when it left the House of Commons, some injury might have been done to the landlord, and some injury might have been done to the shopkeeper who, in the future, might wish to have accommodation land, and not be able to get it. If the Bill passes with the Commons' Amendment, the owner of a town park holding will have a legal right created in the holding which he had not before, and it may be very difficult to deal with the holder of a town park should the holding be required for a town improvement. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] I know of a case where a farmer in the neighbourhood of one of the largest Ulster towns owns a field which the Local Authority required as a cemetery, and the idea of the farmer as to the value of the land differed very materially from the view entertained by the public body of the town. In the second place, the landlord will be made into joint owner, instead of sole owner. Now, that is the case against the contention of those who are in favour of the Bill as it left the Commons. What is a fair and reasonable answer to the proposition? In the first place, the tenants have, in innumerable cases, purchased the tenant-right. I was amazed when I heard the Chief Secretary tell us that there is no such thing as tenant right in town parks. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) read a letter from Ballycastle, of which I have received a copy; but the case does not stand on letters or on the statement of tenants. The Ulster custom was abolished in 1870, about the time the tenants of Ireland were mainly represented by landlords in this House, and nothing was put in the place of the custom which was abolished. I put it to the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General for Ireland, whether he is willing to protect the tenant right in town parks where it exists? The question of transferring the property of the landlord to the tenant has been frequently referred to. This is not a question of transferring the property of the landlord to the tenant. All I ask, and all any Representative of these men ask, is that they shall have a right to have a judicial rent fixed. We ask for the creation of no tenant right where it does not exist. We ask for no tenure that will put a band of iron round any of the towns or villages that are capable of being improved or extended. I am told that the definition in the Bill makes everything all right. Let me draw the attention of the House to this definition. In Committee I tried to secure the omission of the words "let and." What are the words? "Nor shall it be deemed a town park if it is let and used as an ordinary agricultural farm." Why are these words "let and used" put in? The reason is perfectly plain—the letting will be all right, whatever purpose the holding is put to, and it will be quite impossible for that clause to bring any benefit or advantage to the holders of town parks. What are we doing in the matter? The Government issued a Royal Commission to inquire into the whole question of Irish land. They investigated on the spot; and what advice did they give to the House and the Government? They advised that only a place with a population of 5,000 and upwards should be regarded as a town. When the Bill was going through Committee in this House, the Government, on their own Motion, inserted an Amendment construing the word "town" to be a place of 2,000 inhabitants. They resisted 10,000, they resisted 5,000, the recommendation of their own Commission, and they inserted 2,000. The House of Lords, where the tenants have no Representatives—where the landlords are all-powerful—struck out the Government's own Amendment, and we are to knuckle down. We are told that town park holders are shopkeepers, publicans, and gombeen men, and have not the same claims as ordinary agricultural tenant farmers have to judicial rents. I admit they are very far from being in the same position as ordinary agricultural tenants; but the fact that a man is a shopkeeper, a publican, or a gombeen man is not a reason why he should be charged an exorbitant rent. He has a right to have a fair rent fixed; and I do entreat the Party with whom I act not to vote with the Government on this matter—not to raise a fire in the province of Ulster that will not be easily quenched.

Mr. MAHONY (Meath, N.) said, that the speeches of the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell) were not meant to hurt anyone—they were like fireworks, they were meant to be looked at and admired. The hon. Gentleman asked why the Government put the words "let and used" into the clause when the Bill was passing through that House, and he provided the true answer when he said it was to injure the tenant farmers of Ireland. But that was the object of the present Government in all the Amendments they proposed to the Bill—they endeavoured to limit and restrict it, to do as little as they possibly could for the tenants, and to appear as if they were doing a great deal. The hon. Member for South Tyrone now complained of the action of the House of Lords, and yet it was not long ago that he went down to an election for the Northwich Division of Cheshire in the company of sons of those very noble Lords.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. Gentleman is now diverging from the subject of the Amendment which is now under consideration, and which deals with the question of town parks.

Mr. MAHONY, resuming, said, that unless the hon. Member for South Tyrone brought some more effective pressure to bear upon those with whom he was generally supposed to act than he had hitherto brought, he would probably not cause much satisfaction among his constituents. Then, once more, he would discover the force of the old difficulty of running with the hare and hunting with the hounds. The Government were now proposing to break a solemn compact that had been made when this Bill was in Committee. It, however, was not the first instance in which promises had been made by the present Government and then broken. The arguments that had been used against allowing the tenants of town parks attached to small towns to obtain the benefits of the Land Act of 1881 were just those which had been used against that Act itself and which Parliament had overruled. They did not propose to take away from the landlord any right which he could justly claim. The only right which they proposed to take away from him was the power to charge an unjust and exorbitant rent. They desired that the Fair Rent Clause should apply to town parks. All that the Irish Members asked of the Government was to adhere to the compromise to which they had agreed. When they wished to stop discussion upon the Bill, the Government made what they considered a concession, and the whole arrangement was essentially of the nature of a compromise. From the terms of that compromise the Chief Secretary had distinctly departed. At that he (Mr. Mahony) was hardly surprised, inasmuch as he had previous experiences of breach of pledges on the part of the right hon. Gentleman; but he now appealed to him, even at the eleventh hour, not to go back upon the solemn compact which he made with the Irish Members, and not to send this Bill up to the other House with the stain of a broken promise upon it.

Sir CHARLES LEWIS (Antrim, N.) said, he believed that was the second occasion within the last few days on which the right hon. Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) had taken an interest in his (Sir Charles Lewis's) political faith. The right hon. Gentleman had said it was surprising that he did not take any part in these debates. One reason for his abstention was that the right hon. Gentleman himself took so great a part in the debates. On behalf of a large number of independent Members, he asserted that the way they were treated by the right hon. Gentleman on the Front Opposition Bench had become an intolerable nuisance. On all questions the right hon. Gentleman would get up and for an hour or for an hour-and-a-half, would enter *ore rotundo* to an account of his new faith as compared with his old one. *Si monumentum requiris circumspice.* Then they might behold the most conspicuous example in our time of political inconsistency.

Mr. MAHONY, interposing, asked whether the remarks of the hon. Baronet were relevant to the Question before the House?

Mr. SPEAKER said, the Question before the House was whether it should agree or disagree to the Lords' Amendment.

Sir CHARLES LEWIS, continuing his remarks, said, that he was endeavouring in a very humble way to reply to the personal reference to himself made by the right hon. Member for Derby. Listening to the diatribes of the hon. Member for North Donegal (Mr. O'Doherty), and of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby, anybody who did not know better would suppose that this Bill was an attack upon the interests of the tenants of Ireland; but the fact was, that the Bill proceeded from beginning to end on the lines of a sincere endeavour to improve the position of Irish tenants. Listening to the remarks of the right hon. Gentleman, no one would suppose that he was the author of a Bill which refused to leaseholders the very benefits which it was proposed to confer upon them by this Bill. Speaking for himself, he could assure the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby that he did not need any spur from him in order to induce him to do his duty in reference to this clause as it affected the holders of town parks. He came to the House that night for the especial purpose of declaring that it was not his intention to support the Amendment of the House of Lords in reference to the clause. He must say, however, that he did not understand the compromise which it was said had been arrived at in the House of Commons on this matter. It seemed to him that hon. Members on the other side had left the holders of town parks in towns of over 2,000 inhabitants out in the lurch. [" No, no ! " *and cheers.*] They had, it appeared to him, not only left them in the lurch, but were quite ready and anxious to leave them in the lurch. [*Home Rule cries of* " No, no ! "] What he should like to know was the principle upon which the line was drawn at 2,000? The right hon. Gentleman said he had a Memorial on this subject from 100 people in the constituency which he (Sir Charles Lewis) represented; but he believed the Memorial was really only signed by three persons, and they did not recognize the right hon. Gentleman as the determined opponent for years of all attempts to do justice to the holders of town parks. They did not recognize in the right hon. Gentleman the man who had for years been opposed to the rights of tenant farmers. They only saw him in his new clothes with his warpaint on. Why, the right hon. Gentleman had been one of the greatest criminals in this matter, and instead of railing at Her Majesty's Government, the Irish tenants ought to rail at the right hon. Gentleman. The Memorialists did not know the right hon. Gentleman so well as he was known in the House, or they would not have chosen him to espouse their cause. They, on that side of the House, at all events, knew that it did not lie in the mouth of the right hon. Gentleman to use those highsounding words about property and consistency which he was so fond of employing, and which came with such ill grace from him. The right hon. Gentleman sat upon the safety-valve, and shut down the voice of the Irish tenants as long as it suited his purpose to do so. But when he scented danger, and became afraid of an explosion he got off and set the safety-valve free. Now, what he (Sir Charles Lewis) had to say upon the principle of this clause—what he had to say was, that if they left out the obnoxious provision which was objected to, the clause was from beginning to end a decided alleviation of the position in which the holders of town parks were left by the Act of 1881, for which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby was responsible. But he must again repeat that he did not understand the principle on which the 2,000 limit was introduced. He could not for the life of him understand why 2,000 was a better limit, for instance, than 5,000. He could not support the Amendment of the House of Lords, which introduced an obnoxious principle into the Bill, but he was afraid there was no means now of introducing an Amendment challenging the principle of this clause. If it were in Order—which he feared it was not—to move the substitution of 5,000 for 2,000, he should be happy to move it, or he would support any hon. Member who would move it. Otherwise, he should be in favour of restoring the clause to the exact shape in which it was when it left the House of Commons. It was altogether a mistake to say that there was no such thing in Ireland as tenant right in town parks. As regards Ulster, at all events, there were many precedents, and plenty of evidence that the sale of the tenant right in town parks was a by no means infrequent occurrence. He had ascertained that to be a fact not only from his own constituents, but from other sources, and, therefore, he thought it to be his duty to correct the statement of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary, who thought, or appeared to think, that there was no such thing as tenant right in Ireland in town parks. He considered that the Government having assented to a compromise in this matter, it was a very hard and a very unfair thing that an attempt should now be made to depart from it, and, therefore, he was bound to say that he would not vote for the Lord's Amendment. But in announcing that resolution, he was bound to say that in all other respects this Bill was one for which the Irish tenants ought to be, and he believed would be, sincerely grateful to the Government which had introduced and made such strenuous efforts to carry it into law. He would also wish to point out this further question for the consideration of the House, that in the case of small villages, where it might be said small farmers had congregated in large numbers, they were protected already. The Land Courts had protected them under the provisions of the Land Act of 1881. He was of opinion that the limit of between 500 and 600 would protect the small farmers who occupied houses in the small country towns of Ireland.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.) said, that it was all very well for the hon. Baronet (Sir Charles Lewis) to be able to do without the spurs of the right hon. Member for Derby; but he could not do without the spurs of his own constituents. No doubt if he were left to his own unaided judgment in this matter, the hon. Baronet would not be found advocating an alteration from 2,000 to 5,000. That movement on his part was full of suspicion. The hon. Baronet had accused the Irish Members of having left all towns of over 2,000 in the lurch, thereby asserting that their conduct and action was deliberately pursued in order to exclude certain towns in Ulster; but was it not the fact that it was only the result of a compromise that the line had been drawn at 2,000? There were other towns in Ireland interested in this question of town parks besides those in Ulster. The clause as it went up to the other House was undoubtedly a compromise, and the Irish Members naturally expected that the Government would have consistency enough to stand by a compromise which had been arrived at after such an amount of deliberation and exertion on both sides of the House. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer gave in his speech what he was pleased to call "economic reasons" for the attitude of the Government; but there would be no difficulty in putting words into the clause that would meet all the objections the right hon. Gentleman had raised. Englishmen and Scotchmen were no doubt plunged into error by the use of the term "town parks" in connection with this question. Towns of 2,000 inhabitants in Ireland were nothing more than long, straggling villages. There might be some force in applying a clause of this kind to towns like Bristol or Leeds; but in the case of Ireland, where towns were decreasing and industry languishing, it was absurd to go into economic reasons which had no bearing whatever on the case. Under the clause nothing would be taken from the landlords, for the Land Commissioners in fixing the rents would take into account the contiguity of the land to a town. He viewed the adoption by the Government of the Lords' Amendment to the clause as a matter of political necessity, which had obliged them to enter into a compromise with forces outside the House, and over which they had no sort of control.

MR. SINCLAIR (Falkirk, &c.) said, that representing a Scotch constituency, he certainly had no pressure from any of his constituents with regard to this subject; but knowing as he did the feeling that existed in Ireland on the town parks question, he felt very strongly that the Government had made a very decided mistake in adopting the Amendment introduced in "another place," and in not adhering to the compromise that was entered into in this House. The Chief Secretary for Ireland had stated that tenant right had not existed in town parks prior to the Land Act of 1870. [MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Not as a rule.] He had in his pocket a receipt for money paid for tenant right in a town park which was offered by auction in 1863. He was bound to say that the words "town park" did not occur in that receipt; but the term was unknown in Ireland prior to 1870, when it was introduced by the Land Act. There were two sides to the question of town parks. There was the side of the inhabitants, and those who held the town parks at the present time. There could be no question a great mistake was made in the manner in which the Land Act dealt with town parks. The Courts in Ireland had held a certain piece of land at once to be a town park, and not to be a town park. When sub-let it was held to be a town park, because the person to whom it was sub-let lived in the town, but not a town park because the original lessee lived outside. There were other difficulties in connection with the question which called for further legislation; but it would be ridiculous to attempt to legislate during the present Session. He would therefore suggest as a compromise that the present position should be accepted by the House if the Government took upon themselves the responsibility of introducing fresh legislation dealing with the whole question next Session. They were told that a large measure of purchase was to be brought forward, and other difficulties, comprising the numerous ones raised by the case of "Adams *v.* Dunseath," would have to be dealt with. He would therefore urge the acceptance of the compromise he had suggested.

MR. MACARTNEY (Antrim, S.) said, the hon. Member for North Cork (Mr. Flynn) said that the clause as it stood would not affect the landlords' rights. He (Mr. Macartney), however, desired to point out to the House that it would affect the rights of other people—the occupiers of towns who did not hold town parks at the time of the passing of the Bill—because it would diminish the accommodation land now available for their holding, which they were now able to purchase by public auction, and would, therefore, raise the price of the land. But he had a stronger objection to the clause as it stood. The reason why, under the Act of 1881, certain rights had been given to the tenant farmers of Ireland, was because it was asserted, with great truth, that the tenants of Ireland depended for their livelihood upon the land they held; but that could not be urged on behalf of the holders of town parks. They were to a great extent men of substance, though he knew very well that they objected to pay the rent, which was, he admitted, above the value of the agricultural land adjoining the towns; but that rent had been raised by the competition of their neighbours in the towns. He had heard men of substantial position—doctors, large grocers, and men not in any way dependent for their living upon their farms—complain very strongly of the competition rents they had to pay. That did not, however, appear to be any reason for transferring to them, as undoubtedly the Bill when it left that House did transfer to them, the property which existed at the present moment in the landlords' hands. With respect to the question of tenant right, he admitted, with the hon. Member opposite, that it was difficult to lay down a hard-and-fast line upon it. He did not dispute that there were cases in which a sum of money had been given to the holder of a town park which might strongly resemble payment for tenant right upon ordinary agricultural farms. He dissented, however, from the view that tenant right universally applied to town parks throughout Ulster, though he would guard himself from saying that it might not have existed in particular instances, and in particular towns. He would also wish to guard himself from being supposed to base his support of the action of "another place" upon the ground put forward in the Upper House. He did not rely upon the enlargement of the towns of Ireland, for he was obliged to admit that in the great majority of the towns and villages of Ireland there was no sign of any probable large building increase in the future. He wished to rest his support of the Bill, as it had come down to them, on the ground that the benefits that were proposed to be conferred on the holders of town parks were benefits which they were not entitled to on the grounds on which rested the rights conferred on the farmers of Ireland by the Act of 1881. He would also wish to point out this further question for the consideration of the House, that in the case of small villages, where it might be said small farmers had congregated in large numbers, they were protected already. The Land Courts had protected them under the provisions of the Land Act of 1881. He was of opinion that the limit of between 500 and 600 would protect the small farmers who occupied houses in the small country towns of Ireland.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster) and Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.) rose together; but the former gave way.

MR. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN said, that he would only ask the indulgence of the House for one or two minutes while he referred to the Amendment under debate. They had now been discussing this question, which was only one of the infinity of details raised by this Bill, for nearly five hours at great length in every particular, and on its merits, as if it had never been under the consideration of the House before that evening. He confessed that he could not altogether acquit the Government of responsibility for the prolongation of the debate under the circumstances. If they were now discussing the matter as if it were a new question, it was because on this Lords' Amendment in the middle of August, and with all the Business of importance which they had before them, the Government had made a distinct and an important change of front. He ventured to think that the sole issue before the House was not whether upon the merits, if the question had come before them for the first time, they should decide in favour of the Amendment made by the House of Lords, but whether, having decided in a certain way after full discussion, with the consent of the Government, in that House, they were now to change their course, because it had pleased certain noble Lords in "another place" to destroy their work. If the arguments they had heard that night in favour of the Lords' Amendment were solid and valid, he could not understand why the Government consented to send the Bill up in the form in which it left that House. These views were before the House in Committee. Then all the questions about the position of the small towns, as they were called in Ireland, or villages, as they would be known in England, were fully before the Government, and he said they should have answered them, and not have that debate prolonged. But the Government supported, accepted the Amendment in reference to town parks, after they had very fully debated the whole question, and they then appeared to be impressed with the knowledge and the necessity of not creating new vested interests in land in Ireland. Then he said the Government accepted, and accepted readily, the change in their Bill. [Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Not readily.] He said accepted readily an Amendment which gave to all the holders of town parks in the neighbourhood of towns of less than 2,000 inhabitants—[Mr. A. J. BALFOUR again dissented.] Did the right hon. Gentleman mean to say that it was forced on the Government? He (Mr. Chamberlain) declared for himself, and very likely also for those with whom he generally acted, that at that time they had an open mind on the subject. They were ready to hear all that could be said by the Government in defence of the Bill as it stood. It was the Government, and not he and his hon. Friends, who allowed the Amendment to pass, and to be accepted under serious pressure, but, as they were now told, not readily. Whether the Government accepted the Amendment readily or not, however, it appeared to him that it was a matter of the gravest inconvenience that Amendments which had been accepted by the Government in that House, and which had been accepted as the basis of a compromise, by which discussion had been shortened in that House, should be overthrown in "another place" with the consent of the same Government. He ventured to say that what the House had now to look to was this—had anything been discovered since the matter was debated before, which should lead the House to change the opinion which they and the Government then arrived at? The House was told that the House of Lords had discovered that this Amendment was not in the interest of the community. He had rather that the community found it out for themselves. He had the greatest respect for the House of Lords; but he had not been accustomed to regard it as the special representatives of what he called "the community," and he would very much prefer that an Amendment in the interests of the community should proceed from another quarter. It was the Commons House of Parliament who had to look after the interests of the community, and not the House of Lords; and he confessed, after having listened with the greatest care to the discussion which had taken place on the Amendment made by the House of Lords, that he did not think the interests of the community were in any danger. What, then, was the position? As regarded all towns above 2,000 inhabitants, there was no difference of opinion; it was understood that they were outside the provisions of the Act of 1881. But as regarded the condition of those towns or villages under 2,000 inhabitants, what had happened in their case? What the Government was asked to do was this—that town parks in such circumstances should be brought under the jurisdiction of the Land Court, and that a fair rent should be fixed for the tenants of such tenancies. Did that create any vested interest which would be to the disadvantage of the community? He could understand that it would do so if it were possible for the tenants to have a permanent interest in the holding, from which they could not be dispossessed, even if the interest of the community in the town or village required it. But the hon. and learned Member for North Longford (Mr. T. M. Healy) had suggested to the Government an Amendment on which, as far as he (Mr. J. Chamberlain) knew, they had not expressed an opinion, and as to which the House ought to have an opinion from the Government. The hon. and learned Member for North Longford had suggested, in this case, that the landlord should be given a right of resumption for any purpose mentioned in the 5th section of the Land Act of 1881—that was to say, for allotments, building land, sites for schools and churches, and generally for the improvement of the towns and villages. It appeared to him that if the landlord could resume for these purposes, there could be no injury to the community whatever in any provision allowing the Court to fix a fair rent for those tenancies, so long as they remained in the occupation of the holders. He had risen principally to ask the Government to state their opinion as to the suggestion of the hon. and learned Member for North Longford; but in any case he could not undertake to defend the interests of the community at the instigation of the House of Lords; and if the House had failed to defend those interests in previous discussions, they had much better adhere to the opinion and the decision which they previously came to.

MR. PINKERTON (Galway), in arguing that the right of free sale and the power to have judicial rents fixed should be extended to town park holdings, rather than that a state of things should be permitted to exist where the man who wanted accommodation land must first bribe the agent and the bailiff, said, he would refer to a public meeting held in Ballymoney, and the resolutions passed in favour of the extension of the limit from 2,000 inhabitants to 5,000, and the large sums paid for the tenant right of town parks. He was very glad that the right hon. Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) had advocated the popular view on this question. If he had not supported it, he (Mr. Pinkerton) would have advised him not to extend his autumn pilgrimage in Ireland to the towns in the North. This was a burning question in Ireland, and if it was treated with contempt and with a disposition to minimize its importance, an agitation would be created which would go far to destroy the boasted loyalty of the North, on which the Government prided themselves so much.

MR. LEA (Londonderry, S.) said, he thought that they ought to have some expression of opinion from the Government as to what they thought of the Amendment as it was proposed to amend it, or rather add to it, as was proposed by the hon. and learned Member for North Longford. He quite agreed with the view taken by the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. J. Chamberlain) that the Government ought not to give way on that Amendment of the Lords without having first given full consideration to the suggestion of the hon. and learned Member for North Longford. He (Mr. Lea) could also assure the Government, as the previous speaker had done, that the question of town parks was a most important question—in fact, a burning question in the whole of the North of Ireland. There would be strong feeling engendered in the North—over Ulster generally—if the Lords' Amendment in this respect were agreed to. They had been discussing the whole question in that House for five hours, although, when it was before the House originally, there was a protracted discussion, and the Government accepted the Amendment as a compromise, and yet there was no definite reply from any Member of the Government. He considered that, as the Government in that House had accepted the Amendment, and in order to shorten the debate, they should now, apart from what had been done by certain Members in the House of Lords, stick to the Amendment that they had adopted. They had not said that they had accepted the clause under any misunderstanding, and, therefore, in his opinion, they ought to retain it in the Bill. He strongly advised the Government to insist on the Bill as it stood when it went to the House of Lords He was sorry to feel compelled to say that the Government had not acted according to their best judgment in the matter by considering the opinions of two or three Members of the House of Lords, or a few landlord Members from the North of Ireland. If the Bill were passed with the 2,000 population limit left out of it, it would do a great deal to bring about an agitation in the Province of Ulster which would gradually spread, and which he, for one, as an Ulster Member, would deeply regret.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 206; Noes 164: Majority 42.

AYES.

Addison, J. E. W.
Agg-Gardner, J. T.
Ainslie, W. G.
Aird, J.
Allsopp, hon. P.
Ambrose, W.
Amherst, W. A. T.
Anstruther, H. T.
Ashmead-Bartlett, E.
Baden-Powell, G. S.
Bailey, Sir J. R.
Baird, J. G. A.
Balfour, rt. hon. A. J.
Banes, Major G. E.
Baring, T. C.
Baring, Viscount
Barry, A. H. Smith-
Bartley, G. C. T.
Bates, Sir E.
Baumann, A. A.
Beach, W. W. B.
Beadel, W. J.
Beckett, W.
Bentinck, Lord H. C.
Bentinck, W. G. C.
Bethell, Commander G. R.
Bickford-Smith, W.
Birkbeck, Sir E.
Blundell, Colonel H. B. H.
Bond, G. H.
Bonsor, H. C. O.
Boord, T. W.
Borthwick, Sir A.
Bristowe, T. L.
Brodrick, hon. W. St. J. F.
Brookfield, A. M.
Bruce, Lord H.
Burghley, Lord
Campbell, Sir A.
Campbell, J. A.
Carmarthen, Marq. of
Cavendish, Lord E.
Charrington, S.
Clarke, Sir E. G.
Coghill, D. H.
Colomb, Capt. J. C. R.
Commerell, Adml. Sir J. E.
Compton, F.
Cooke, C. W. R.
Corbett, J.
Corry, Sir J. P.
Cotton, Capt. E. T. D.
Crossman, Gen. Sir W.
Cubitt, right hon. G.
Curzon, Viscount
Dalrymple, Sir C.
Davenport, H. T.
De Cobain, E. S. W.
De Lisle, E. J. L. M. P.
De Worms, Baron H.
Dickson, Major A. G.
Dimsdale, Baron R.
Duncombe, A.
Dyke, right hon. Sir W. H.
Ebrington, Viscount
Egerton, hon. A. de T.
Elliot, hon. A. R. D.
Ewart, W.
Eyre, Colonel H.
Fergusson, right hon. Sir J.
Field, Admiral E.
Finch, G. H.
Fisher, W. H.
Fitzgerald, R. U. P.
Fitz-Wygram, Gen. Sir F. W.
Fletcher, Sir H.
Folkestone, right hon. Viscount
Forwood, A. B.
Fowler, Sir R. N.
Gardner, R. Richardson-
Gedge, S.
Gibson, J. G.
Gilliat, J. S.
Godson, A. F.
Goldsworthy, Major-General W. T.
Gorst, Sir J. E.
Goschen, rt. hn. G. J.
Greenall, Sir G.
Grimston, Viscount
Hall, C.
Hamilton, right hon. Lord G. F.
Hamilton, Col. C. E.
Hamley, Gen. Sir E. B.
Hanbury, R. W.
Hankey, F. A.
Hartington, Marq. of
Havelock-Allan, Sir H. M.
Heathcote, Capt. J. H. Edwards-
Herbert, hon. S.
Hermon-Hodge, R. T.
Hill, right hon. Lord A. W.
Hill, A. S.
Hoare, S.
Hobhouse, H.
Holland, rt. hon. Sir H. T.
Holloway, G.
Hornby, W. H.
Howard, J.
Howard, J. M.
Hughes, Colonel E.
Hunt, F. S.
Hunter, Sir W. G.
Isaacs, L. H.
Jackson, W. L.
Jarvis, A. W.
Jeffreys, A. F.
Johnston, W.
Kelly, J. R.
Kennaway, Sir J. H.
Kenyon, hon. G. T.
Kerans, F. H.
Kimber, H.
King-Harman, right hon. Colonel E. R.
Knowles, L.
Kynoch, G.
Lafone, A.
Lambert, C.
Laurie, Colonel R. P.
Lawrence, Sir J. J. T.
Lawrence, W. F.
Leighton, S.
Lewisham, right hon. Viscount
Llewellyn, E. H.
Long, W. H.
Lowther, J. W.
Macartney, W. G. E.
Macdonald, right hon. J. H. A.
Maclean, J. M.
Maclure, J. W.
Madden, D. H.
Makins, Colonel W. T.
Malcolm, Col. J. W.
Mallock, R.
Manners, right hon. Lord J. J. R.
Marriott, right hon. W. T.
Marum, E. M.
Matthews, rt. hon. H.
Maxwell, Sir H. E.
Mayne, Adml. R. C.
Mills, hon. C. W.
Milvain, T.
More, R. J.
Morrison, W.
Mount, W. G.
Mowbray, R. G. C.
Murdoch, C. T.
Northcote, hon. H. S.
Paget, Sir R. H.
Parker, hon. F.
Pearce, Sir W.
Pelly, Sir L.
Plunket, right hon. D. R.
Plunkett, hon. J. W.
Powell, F. S.
Puleston, Sir J. H.
Raikes, rt. hon. H. C.
Rankin, J.
Rasch, Major F. C.
Ritchie, rt. hon. C. T.
Robertson, J. P. B.
Robinson, B.
Ross, A. H.
Round, J.
Royden, T. B.
Salt, T.
Sandys, Lieut.-Col. T. M.
Saunderson, Col. E. J.
Selwin-Ibbetson, right hon. Sir H. J.
Selwyn, Captain C. W.
Sidebotham, J. W.
Sidebottom, W.
Smith, right hon. W. H.
Smith, A.
Spencer, J. E.
Stanhope, rt. hon. E.
Stephens, H. C.
Stewart, M. J.
Talbot, J. G.
Tapling, T. K.
Temple, Sir R.
Theobald, J.
Tomlinson, W. E. M.
Vernon, hon. G. R.
Vincent, C. E. H.
Waring, Colonel T.
Watson, J.
Webster, Sir R. E.
Webster, R. G.
Weymouth, Viscount
Whitley, E.
Whitmore, C. A.
Wodehouse, E. R.
Wolmer, Viscount
Wortley, C. B. Stuart-
Wroughton, P.
Yerburgh, R. A.
Young, C. E. B.

TELLERS.

Douglas, A. Akers-
Walrond, Col. W. H.

NOES.

Abraham, W. (Glam.)
Abraham, W. (Limerick, W.)
Allison, R. A.
Ballantine, W. H. W.
Barran, J.
Biggar, J. G.
Blane, A.
Bolton, J. C.
Bradlaugh, C.
Bright, Jacob
Brunner, J. T.
Buchanan, T. R.
Burt, T.
Byrne, G. M.
Campbell, Sir G.
Campbell, H.
Carew, J. L.

Chamberlain, rt. hn. J.
Chance, P. A.
Channing, F. A.
Clancy, J. J.
Clark, Dr. G. B.
Cobb, H. P.
Coleridge, hon. B.
Collings, J.
Commins, A.
Condon, T. J.
Connolly, L.
Conway, M.
Conybeare, C. A. V.
Corbet, W. J.
Cossham, H.
Cox, J. R.
Craven, J.
Crawford, D.
Cremer, W. R.
Crilly, D.
Deasy, J.
Dillon, J.
Dillwyn, L. L.
Dodds, J.
Ellis, T. E.
Esmonde, Sir T. H. G.
Fenwick, C.
Ferguson R. C. Munro-
Finucane, J.
Flynn, J. C.
Foley, P. J.
Forster, Sir C.
Fox, Dr. J. F.
Fuller, G. P.
Gardner, H.
Gilhooly, J.
Gill, H. J.
Gill, T. P.
Gladstone, H. J.
Gray, E. D.
Gully, W. C.
Haldane, R. B.
Hanbury-Tracy, hon. F. S. A.
Harcourt, rt. hn. Sir W. G. V. V.
Harrington, E.
Harrington, T. C.
Harris, M.
Hayden, L. P.
Hayne, C. Seale-
Healy, T. M.
Heneage, right hon. E.
Hooper, J.
James, C. H.
Joicey, J.
Jordan, J.
Kennedy, E. J.
Kenny, C. S.
Kenny, J. E.
Kenny, M. J.
Kenrick, W.
Lalor, R.
Lane, W. J.
Lawson, H. L. W.
Lea, T.
Leahy, J.
Lefevre, right hon. G. J. S.
Lewis, Sir C. E.
Macdonald, W. A.
MacInnes, M.
Mac Neill, J. G. S.
M'Arthur, A.
M'Arthur, W. A.
M'Cartan, M.
M'Carthy, J.
M'Donald, P.
M'Ewan, W.
M'Kenna, Sir J. N.
M'Lagan, P.
Mahony, P.
Mappin, Sir F. T.
Mason, S.
Mayne, T.
Molloy, B. C.
Murphy, W. M.
Neville, R.
Newnes, G.
Nolan, Colonel J. P.
Nolan, J.
O'Brien, J. F. X.
O'Brien, P.
O'Brien, P. J.
O'Brien, W.
O'Connor, A.
O'Connor, J. (Kerry)
O'Connor, J. (Tipperary)
O'Connor, T. P.
O'Doherty, J. E.
O'Hanlon, T.
O'Kelly, J.
Parker, C. S.
Parnell, C. S.
Pease, A. E.
Pickard, B.
Pickersgill, E. H.
Pinkerton, J.
Pitt-Lewis, G.
Portman, hon. E. B.
Power, R.
Priestley, B.
Provand, A. D.
Pyne, J. D.
Quinn, T.
Redmond, J. E.
Reynolds, W. J.
Roberts, J.
Robertson, E.
Robinson, T.
Roe, T.
Rowntree, J.
Russell, T. W.
Schwann, C. E.
Sexton, T.
Sheehan, J. D.
Sheehy, D.
Sheil, E.
Shirley, W. S.
Sinclair, W. P.
Smith, S.
Stack, J.
Stanhope, hon. P. J.
Stansfeld, right hon. J.
Stewart, H.
Sullivan, D.
Sullivan, T. D.
Summers, W.
Sutherland, A.
Swinburne, Sir J.
Tanner, C. K.
Tuite, J.
Waddy, S. D.
Wallace, R.
Watt, H.
Williams, J. Powell-
Williamson, S.
Winterbotham, A. B.
Woodall, W.
Woodhead, J.

TELLERS.
Flower, C.
Morley, A.

Mr. T. M. HEALY then rose to move an Amendment in the clause relating to town parks. His proposal was that the tenants of holdings of that class should be entitled to the benefit of none of the provisions of the Land Act of 1881, with the single exception that they should be entitled to have a fair rent fixed. The Government must be prepared to go in the teeth of the recommendation of their own Commissioners if they would not allow those tenants to have a fair rent fixed. His proposal was that a landlord may, during the continuance of the statutory term, apply to resume his holding. Under ordinary circumstances, a landlord could not resume the holding. He thought they had got the Tory Party in a fix on this point. They either objected to these men having a fair rent fixed by their own tribunals, or not—they were either in favour of fairplay for these men, or they were not.

Amendment proposed,

In page 6, line 26, of the Bill, after "thereof," to insert, as a Consequential Amendment, the words "Provided that section eight of the said Act shall be held to apply to such holdings as adjoin towns of not exceeding two thousand inhabitants, with this modification, that the landlord may at any time during the continuance of the statutory term resume possession of the holding, or any part thereof, with the consent of the Court, for any of the purposes mentioned in section five, sub-section six, of the said Act."—(*Mr. T. M. Healy.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said, he had not risen before to reply to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) and the hon. Member for South Londonderry (Mr. Lea), because he was under the impression—correctly, it turned out—that he would have this opportunity of speaking on the question. He should now inform the House why it was the Government were precluded from accepting the Amendment. He must first express his sorrow that the hon. and learned Member (Mr. T. M. Healy) thought it necessary in the course of his speech to cast a slur upon the Judges who had got to administer the Land Act in Ireland.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: I beg your pardon—I did nothing of the kind. I said you appointed and reappointed them.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said, the hon. and learned Gentleman stated—and he was sorry he did so—that the Land Commissioners were the creatures of the present Government. When any hon. Gentleman stated that the members of a tribunal which had got to decide certain questions were the creatures of a political Party, that, he submitted, was a slur on those Judges. In the present case, that was a slur on the Land Commissioners.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: As a personal explanation, may I be allowed to say that if I used the expression quoted by the right hon. Gentleman, I did so following the example of Lord Salisbury, who spoke of these persons—the Land Commissioners—as the persecutors of the landlords.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said, he did not know what the hon. and learned Gentleman's idea might be of "a personal explanation," but he had started a novel precedent. One objection to the Amendment was that it proposed, under the guise of fixing a fair rent, to give fixity of tenure to those who were excluded from it by the Act of 1881. The main objection, however, was that it proposed to give, to the injury of small towns, perpetuity of tenure to those who might cease to be residents. Take the case of a butcher who might want accommodation for his stock. If they passed the Amendment of the hon. and learned Gentleman, the butcher would obtain perpetuity of tenure. He might move away, but he would retain the right, and his successor would no longer be able to obtain the same advantages. If perpetuity of tenure were created, and if a landlord wished to resume possession for the sake of building cottages or providing land for allotments, he would not be able to afford to do it, and therefore he would be precluded from building cottages or giving allotments, not by the terms, but by the effect of the Amendment. That did not exhaust the difficulty. If a tradesman left the town, his successor could not be provided with the accommodation land required, because the landlord could not resume possession. The hon. and learned Member had not met the chief objection to the Amendment which the Government took in the public interest, and that was that it gave for accommodation lands perpetuity of tenure to the persons who happened now to be tenants of them. But the Amendment differed so little from that on which they had just divided, that, practically, the House might be said to have come to a decision on the matter.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT said, that the Government were being driven from pillar to post. They were abandoning one argument after another, and the last that had been used was the thinnest and weakest of all. The arguments used that night by the Government condemned the Bill they sent to the House of Lords. He sympathized with the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary on the subject of the language that ought to be addressed to the Irish Land Court Judges, and he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would convey the sentiments he had expressed in that House to the Prime Minister. The hon. and learned Member for North Longford (Mr. T. M. Healy) was justified in saying that Lord Salisbury appointed a Committee in the House of Lords to attack the Land Court Judges, and that he attacked them himself by name. First of all, the Amendment of the hon. and learned Member got rid of what he might without offence call the hypocritical pretence of promoting the interest of the community, and the saying that land could not be had for cottages or allotments, which was the argument used in the House of Lords. The right hon. Gentleman said that it involved fixity of tenure. Well, he dared say it did, because there was no use in giving fair rent unless you gave fixity of tenure; because experience showed the animosity felt by the landlords for a fair rent, and that the moment a fair rent was fixed, unless a man had fixity of tenure, he was instantly turned out. What was before the House was the fixing of fair rents for the town parks. [A Ministerial Member: Contract.] But contract was given up even in the case of the leaseholders, so that the hon. Member was behind the age, and behind the Government he supported. It must be clearly understood that the Government were refusing to fix a fair rent for the town parks in Ireland. They had got rid of the community with one exception, which would become known in Ulster, he had no doubt, as the celebrated argument about the butcher who was either a millionaire or a bankrupt. When it was known that the great town park question rested upon this hypothetical butcher, the position of the Government would appear as ridiculous as it was unjust. That argument reminded him of a story told by the senior right hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. John Bright). A peasant was told that if Free Trade was carried the landlords would leave the country; and he replied, "They bean't going to take the land with them, be they?" And so, if the butcher went away, he would leave the land, and it would be let to some resident who would use it. How was the town to lose the benefits of the land? It was quite obvious that the butcher would dispose of it to someone else in the town who would desire to use it, and therefore the community would not suffer. He owed some apology to the House for speaking on this point; but so long as the Government produced such ridiculous arguments it was necessary to show their absurdity. He was not responsible for the waste of time which had occurred in consequence of the arguments which the Chief Secretary for Ireland had produced; but if the Government had nothing better to say for themselves they were in a poor plight. When they had succeeded in rejecting the terms proposed for the holders of town parks, would the matter end there? Not at all. It would occupy the same position in Ulster and throughout Ireland as the leaseholders' question had occupied for the last five years; and the Government would be obliged to bring in a Bill for the express purpose of undoing all that they had now done. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer would get up next Session and say that he held all his former opinions, and was going to support the Town Parks Bill. The Government were only preparing for themselves a new humiliation, and a new exposition of their own inconsistency and want of principle. Would it not be better for them to make a clean sweep of the job while they were about it, abandon their hypothetical butcher, and make a common-sense affair of the Bill? What were they fighting for? For the votes of the landlords in the House of Lords, and nothing else. If the Government were fighting for their own principles, why were they abandoning the Bill which they accepted, and sent to the House of Lords? The Chief Secretary for Ireland himself proposed an Amendment accepting the 2,000 limit, and now he had stated that it was contrary to his convictions. The fact was, that the Government had proposed a scheme in the House of Commons with reference to Irish land, and had then used the House of Lords in order to destroy their proposal. That was a situation which would never settle the Irish Land Question. He was very glad that the hon. and learned Member for North Longford had moved his Amendment, because it would make clear to everyone, inside and outside the House, what the ground was upon which the Government rested their case. The whole of the argument with regard to the protection of the community was a sham. [*Ministerial cries of* "No!"] As long as hon. Members said "No," he should be obliged to repeat his assertion. The whole of that argument as to the interests of the community was a sham. [*Cries of* "Oh!"] If hon. Gentlemen on the Ministerial Benches preferred that method of expressing their opinions he could not help it. He repeated that the argument of the Government as to the interests of the community was all a sham, and that the object of the House of Lords in the action which they had taken on this matter was to maintain the power which they now exercised of charging upon the holders of town parks an unfair rent.

Mr. W. H. SMITH said, that he wished to say a few words with the object of recalling the attention of the House to the question before them. The right hon. Gentleman (Sir William Harcourt) had made a long dissertation upon consistency; but he (Mr. W. H. Smith) did not possess sufficient agility to follow him in his discussion of the point. It was really edifying to hear the right hon. Gentleman discourse upon consistency. The question now before them substantially was nothing more or less than a revival, in a slightly mitigated form, of the discussion which had already gone on since 5 o'clock that evening, and which had just been decided. The hon. and learned Member for North Longford proposed to the House that towns which were under 2,000 inhabitants should come under the Land Act of 1881, so far as Clause 8 was concerned. That clause was the operative clause to the whole Act; and, therefore, to all intetests and purposes, the hon. Member proposed, after the House had agreed to the Lords' Amendment, to ask them virtually to disagree, so far as these holdings were concerned. They were hearing over and over again the arguments which had been under discussion for the last five hours. The same clause was substantially being tried over again, and he submitted that they were really wasting the time of the House in discussing once more another phase of the same question. It was on that ground that he claimed that the Question be now put.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Question be now put."—(*Mr. W. H. Smith.*)

Mr. T. M. HEALY rose to a point of Order, and asked whether it was competent for the right hon. Gentleman, after having made a speech, to move that the Question be now put.

Mr. SPEAKER: That point was settled the other day."

Question put accordingly, "That the Question be now put."

The House *divided*:—Ayes 225; Noes 158: Majority 67.—(Div. List, No. 399.)

Question put,

"That the words 'Provided that section eight of the Act shall be held to apply to such holdings as adjoin towns of not exceeding two thousand inhabitants, with this modification, that the landlord may at any time during the continuance of the statutory term resume possession of the holding, or any part thereof, with the consent of the Court, for any of the purposes mentioned in section five, sub-section six of the said Act,' be there inserted."

The House *divided*:—Ayes 166; Noes 212: Majority 46.—(Div. List, No. 400.)

Several Amendments to the Commons Amendments *disagreed to.*

Amendment, in Clause E, line 18, to insert after "respectively," the words "so that the rent fixed under the provisions of this section shall differ by the difference in prices as aforesaid in the respective years," the next Amendment, read a second time.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. Gibson) (Liverpool, Walton), in moving to agree with the Lords in the Amendment which was inserted on the Motion of Lord Cadogan, which provides that "the rent fixed under the provisions of this section shall differ by the difference in prices as aforesaid in the respective years," said, it was an Amendment of a purely explanatory character, placing beyond doubt what the view of the Government was on the point when the Bill was last before the Committee, that view being fully explained by the Chief Secretary. Therefore, he begged to move that the House do agree with the Lords in it.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said Amendment."—(*Mr. Attorney General for Ireland.*)

Mr. PARNELL (Cork): It must be obvious to the House that it is quite impossible to proceed with an Amendment of this important character at this hour of the night (11.45)—an Amendment which was described, and described truly, on the last occasion that this matter was touched upon, as one which deprives the whole Bill of at least one-half of its value to the Irish tenants. I am certainly very much surprised that the Government suppose that the House can for a moment entertain a question of this magnitude at this hour of the night—I am sure the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) will see that it is not proper to ask the House to go into a question of this sort now. Sir, I do not wish to touch upon the merits of the Amendment at this time, because I consider that the Government is not entitled to ask us to go into the merits of this question now. The clause, as it stood, was the result of a compromise arrived at in this House after a most exhaustive discussion, and it was a surprise to all of us to find that, at a moment's notice, the Amendment which is now under discussion was moved by Lord Cadogan in "another place." The question of judicial rents is one which I would much prefer to see left alone altogether, rather than have it tampered with in this fashion. The Government would do better, in my judgment, to allow the portion of the Bill relating to leaseholders to proceed by itself, and to leave this other question outside, or for future consideration. For, what do you now propose to do? Under the plea of re-adjusting judicial rents, you condemn the tenants to pay these rents with only a reduction of one-half the extent they are entitled to. It would be easy to prove, with mathematical accuracy, that, under the words of Lord Cadogan's Amendment, where the tenant is entitled to 20 per cent he will only get 10, and, similarly, where he is entitled to 30 per cent he will only get 15. That is a proceeding which I and my Colleagues can never agree to; and it is absurd of the Government, at this late period of the Session, to introduce, and to persist in introducing, this bone of contention. Rather than accept such an illusory concession to the Irish tenants who have had their rents fixed, I would see the whole Bill go by the board. I do not think that the Government are justified in flying in the face of their own declarations, and of the Report of the Cowper Commission, by attempting an arrangement of this kind. If you wish to preserve that portion of the Bill which relates to leaseholders, do so by all means—allow the leaseholders to get that reduction which the Bill entitles them to; although, at the same time, I am bound to say that the provisions with regard to leaseholders are maimed and insufficient in their character. Do not offer a concession of this sort to the judicial tenants, which is only half of that to which they are justly and strictly entitled. It cannot have the slightest effect in the settlement of the question which has provided so much disturbance in Ireland of late. A reduction of rents—I will not say based upon prices—but a reduction of rents which, in the words of the Amendment, "shall differ by the difference in prices aforesaid in the respective years," must be illusory and one-sided in many cases, and unfair in the great majority of cases. If you go to a large grazing tenant and tell him that his rent is to differ by the difference in prices as aforesaid in the respective years, you will probably do him justice, and no more; but if you go to the tillage tenant in the North of Ireland who grows flax, and breaks up his land and employs labour, and who is in altogether a different position to the grazing tenant, and tell him that his rent is to differ by the difference in prices as aforesaid in the respective years, you certainly only give him one-half of that he is entitled to. His fixed charges for the cultivation of his holding remains the same, and to tell him that his rent is only to be fixed in the way appointed by the words of this Amendment, is to say that he is only to get 10 or 15 per cent reduction when he was entitled to 20 or 30 per cent. Now, we have not had the whole of the history of this correspondence between the Government and the Land Commission. We had the other evening a portion of the letter——

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I beg the hon. Gentleman's pardon. I gave the whole of the letter.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: What is the date of it?

Mr. PARNELL: The right hon. Gentleman did not give us even the date. He gave us a paragraph disconnected from the commencement of the letter.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I gave the whole letter except the date.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Who was it addressed to?

Mr. PARNELL: The right hon. Gentleman has not informed us what communication this communication from the Land Commissioners was in reply to; he has not informed us what the communication was which the Government made to the Land Commission, or whether there has been any; he has not informed us whether this letter was a voluntary communication on the part of the Land Commission, or whether it has been sought for. He has not informed us whether, at the time this letter was written by the Land Commission, the Commission was in possession of the views of the Government with regard to this subsequent Amendment, or whether at any time the Government informed the Land Commission as to the terms of the Amendment before it was proposed by Lord Cadogan and adopted by the other House. In fact, the Government have kept us in the dark as to most important matters, without reference to which it is impossible for us to proceed. I ask the Government whether they intend to lay the full Correspondence before the House—to give us their own letter to the Land Commission, and the circumstances under which the reply of the Commission was given. Without such full information we are proceeding in the dark. I wish to say, further, that if you think that because the Irish landlords have created an uproar when they have seen the clause as fixed by this House, you are justified in going back upon the concession you made to the Irish tenants, and that such going back will be satisfactory to the country, you are very much mistaken. The concession which was given to the judicial tenants was one required by the circumstance of the time and the exigencies of the position. It was not an excessive concession; in my judgment it was a smaller alleviation than they were justly entitled to; but the Irish Members accepted it for the sake of peace. We accepted it in good faith, and the last thing that occurred to our minds was that the Government would have adopted such an Amendment as that which they have adopted, one which completely cuts the ground from under the feet of those judicial tenants in their struggle for existence. We have heard a great deal about the Plan of Campaign, and in condemnation of it; but you are supplying fuel for a larger and more extensive and more formidable Plan of Campaign than you have yet encountered. The Irish tenants have been waiting for this concession, more especially in view of the Report of the Cowper Commission, to see what was going to be done for them. The Plan of Campaign was only adopted on 40 estates in Ireland; but if the Government go to the Irish tenants with this illusory concession of 10 or 15 per cent, they will drive them into the Plan of Campaign, and will show them that it is useless to look to this House for redress, that the Government does not know its own mind, that it is driven first to one side and then to the other by every impulse and every breath of wind, and that the result of this Bill is that the Government have been inclined at the last by the strongest impulse they have received. They had made their calculations when they introduced their Bill in "another place," and they thought that they could get through without any concession at all to the judicial tenants. When the Bill reached this House, the Government discovered that they must make some concession, and they made it, not because they thought it was just or right that the judicial tenants should get a concession, not because they deemed that it was inequitable they should continue to pay excessive rents, but for the contemptible reason stated by Lord Salisbury himself in "another place," that it would be impossible for this Government of shifts and expedients to remain in Office if they did not consent to this concession. This is how you propose to reconcile the tenants of Ireland and of Ulster to your Government; this is how you propose to make them believe in the justice and high character of your Government. But after making this concession, for this reason you withdraw it, and for reasons equally contemptible. A good many of the Liberal Unionists who had threatened to vote against you if you refused to reduce or re-adjust the rents of the judicial tenants have left town, and you find, on reckoning up heads, that you can get a majority in support of withdrawing the concession. It is desirable that the Irish tenants should understand this, and that the Ulster tenants should see the motives which sway Her Majesty's Government in this matter. The one great question with the Government is, how best to remain in Office. It is desirable that the English constituencies should understand this also. This is the strong and stable Government which is to wean the Irish people by continual instances of well-doing and good government, and such is the result. You cannot adhere to your own plans for a month together; you change according to the exigencies of the moment. You do an act of justice in order to save your own skin, and then undo it when it appears safe to do so. That is the sum and total of the policy of Her Majesty's Government. It is a most contemptible policy. It is a policy which is condemned not only in Ireland, but in the minds of all right-thinking and just men wherever they are found. The Government might have governed Ireland wisely and well if it only had had sufficient common sense; but that opportunity is now lost. The concession of the Government is quite illusory, and the reputation of the Irish tenants repudiate it, and call upon the Government to withdraw it. We call upon you to withdraw the whole Bill if you like, and leave the Irish tenants to fight it out unprotected by sham concessions. Leave them with the Coercion Act. They will be none the worse for it. They will get all the better Bill this time twelve months. If this question is left unsettled for a while all the better. You are now going to give the tenants a miserable reduction of 10 or 15 per cent, when they are justly entitled to 20, 25, or 30 per cent reduction. We warn you that your Bill will break down, especially this part of the Bill; 200,000 tenants have been looking with some hopes to the proceedings in connection with this Bill. They will be bitterly disappointed, and will learn to trust those persons who told them not to look to Parliament for redress, but to look to methods outside the law and outside the Constitution, which, in the long run, have been the only arguments that Parliament have ever listened to. This has been proved over and over again in the history of Ireland, and now you are going to prove it. I hope it will be the last proof you will ever have of making.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): Some of the observations which have fallen from the hon. Gentleman the Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) appears to me unworthy of anyone holding the position of Leader of any Party, and are not to be justified by any excess of Party zeal or Party bitterness. On the accusations made by the hon. Gentleman I shall dwell for a moment. He has told us that the sole motive which has influenced Her Majesty's Government in proposing in the other House this Amendment which we now desire to advance is that we found that a number of Liberal Unionists have left town, and that we thought we had, therefore, a freer hand in this House; that we took advantage of that circumstance to move an Amendment which, under other circumstances, we should not have had the courage to propose. I leave those accusations to be answered by anyone who has watched the debates in this House. They fall by their own weight, and, as I said before, they appear to me to be utterly unworthy of an hon. Gentleman in the position of the Member for Cork. It would have been well had he restricted his attacks on Her Majesty's Government to the other parts of his speech. The hon. Gentleman has told us that the Bill, in its present state, is not a boon which is worth offering to the tenants of Ireland. But I thought that in the earlier part of his speech a suspicion did cross the hon. Member's mind that there were 110,000 leaseholders in Ireland, at all events, who would see the destruction of this Bill with the greatest regret. The hon. Member actually suggested that the House should retain certain parts of the Bill, and should throw overboard the others, which he declared are of no use to the tenantry of Ireland. The hon. Member is one of the most experienced Members of this House. No one more intimately acquainted with its forms, and the hon. Member must know as well as any hon. Member that it was absolutely out of the power of the Government, and out of the power of the House, having in view the constitution of the House, to drop part of the Bill, as he suggests, and to retain the remainder. The Bill has now got to a point when we must either agree with the Lords' Amendments, or the Bill will be lost in its entirety; and the hon. Gentleman apparently regards that consummation with equanimity. Now, Sir, that attitude of mind of the hon. Gentleman was very remarkable. He has posed always in this House as the chief supporter, defender, guide, and advocate of the Irish tenantry. Well, we are now dealing with a Bill which, beyond controversy, gives a gigantic boon to every leaseholder in Ireland. Besides that the Bill gives, under a clause which is very familiar to Gentlemen who have listened to the debates in this House, an equitable relief and stay of eviction under circumstances which it is not necessary now to dwell upon. Besides that, by the admission made by the hon. Gentleman, in the speech just delivered, the clause as amended by the House of Lords will probably have the effect of giving a substantial reduction of rent to every judicial tenant in Ireland whose rent was fixed between 1882 and 1885. It is perfectly true the hon. Gentleman asserts that that reduction is only half what it ought to be. I will deal with that directly, and will show that the statement is entirely inaccurate. The hon. Member admits, at all events, that under this Bill the tenants will get half the reduction which they ought to have, and yet the hon. Gentleman the advocate of the interests of the tenants of Ireland, declares——

MR. PARNELL: I beg the right hon. Gentleman's pardon; I did not admit that the tenants will get half the reduction they ought to get. What I said was that they will get half the reduction which they would have got if the Bill had been left as it was when it left this House.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR : I do not think there is much difference between the statement I have made and the explanation of the hon. Gentleman. He never said, so far as I recollect, that under the clause as it originally stood any equitable reduction of rent would be given by the Land Commission ; therefore, I am fully justified in my assertion. This is a Bill the loss of which the hon. Gentleman, speaking in the name of the tenantry of Ireland—speaking according to his own pretensions in the interest of the tenantry of Ireland—professes to see with perfect indifference. Does not the hon. Gentleman see that he, who is so ready to pour accusations on the head of Her Majesty's Government, and who shrinks from no accusation, however dark, when dealing with their motives, lays himself open to the darkest suspicion? Does he not perceive that if there be anybody ready to accuse him, and those with whom he acts, of being anxious for their own purposes to promote disorder in Ireland, he gives them, by the words he has spoken to-night, the strongest justification for that contention? Now, the hon. Gentleman has made some observations with regard to a communication which I read to the House the other day from the Land Commissioners. The hon. Member was not, I think, in the House at Question time; had he been so, he would have been aware that I gave as full an account as I could of all the particulars connected with that letter, that I gave the date, and that I told the House what I think I told them before, that the whole of that letter has already been read to the House.

Mr. T. M. HEALY : Whom was it addressed to?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR : The hon. and learned Member for North Longford (Mr. T. M. Healy) gave Notice at Question time that he would move that that letter be laid upon the Table. I shall not oppose that. But the hon. and learned Gentleman said he should make another Motion. He said he should move for all the correspondence. I will not oppose that Motion either, but I advise the hon. and learned Gentleman not to make it, because there is no correspondence to be laid on the Table. When the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) suggested in his speech to-night that the action of the Land Commission had been initiated by the Executive of this country, I am sure he would not have made such an assertion had he been present at Question time to-day, when I gave a categorical denial to it. The hon. Member for Cork says that the diminution of judicial rents is not half of what the tenants have a right to, and that that can be explained with mathematical accuracy, and beyond controversy. I can only suppose that when the hon. Gentleman made the astonishing assertion, he had in his mind the argument which was replied to the other day with great ability by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain), and which has been presented to the House more than once by the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon). That argument may be put very simply thus—Suppose the total value in money of the produce of a holding to be £99—I take that sum because it is easily divisible by three—and suppose, for the sake of argument, that one-third goes in working the farm, one-third goes to the tenant, and one-third goes to the landlord, a fall in prices occurs, equal to about 18 per cent, which would reduce the gross value of the produce to £81. Well, if that £81 is divided again into three in the same manner, that will give £27. [An hon. Member : That will not do.] I hope hon. Gentlemen will allow me to finish my argument. I repeat that will give £27 for working the farm, £27 to the tenant, and £27 to the landlord. But the hon. Gentleman says the objection to that is that the working of the farm will not fall 18 per cent, but will remain at £33; and that assertion is supplemented by the statement that the profit of the tenant ought not to fall either. On that theory, of course, the £81 must be divided in this way—£33 for the working of the farm ; £33 for the profit of the tenant, and the remainder, £15, for the landlord. That, I understand, is actually put before the House as a fair account of what ought to be done. Some hon. Gentlemen appear to think that the tenant ought to share the loss. On that principle, leaving the working expenses at £33, there would remain £48 to be divided, which would give £24 to the one, and £24 to the other, being, no doubt, greater than the actual fall in prices. I shall not be contradicted when I say in England or Ireland there is no farm of a kind to which an argument of that description would be without a parallel. In America there are owners of farms who live in towns. They send out labourers to sow and reap, and then they sell the crops, and bring all the labourers back. The farmers do not live on the farms, but simply make their profits out of the difference between the working expenses and the total sum obtained upon the sale of the produce. There is no farm of that description in England, Scotland, or Ireland. The nearest approach to that condition of things are the large farms of this country; but even when used with reference to those large farms the argument is extremely erroneous. To begin with the cost of cultivation does not remain the same. I admit that the cost of labour has not fallen much. It has fallen somewhat in Ireland, and that is the first item of diminution. Besides that, all machinery—all that you have to buy to work a farm—has also fallen in value. The hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) brought forward the other day with great force the particular case of a farmer who bought a great deal of stock for the purpose of fattening. That is exactly the point. That man does not suffer in the least by the general fall of prices, because the fall of price of the stock he buys is equivalent to the diminution in the price of the stock which he sells. But that is not all. No man, not even the largest farmer in England or Scotland, sells everything he has on his farm. Every farmer largely uses the produce—even the best farmer. He uses oats for his horses; he uses a large amount of produce on his own table. Then, it must be recollected that even the largest farmers—even they as much as any—have obtained with their farms as one privilege, the privilege of residence—I mean they have houses rent free. [An hon. MEMBER: In Ireland they have built the houses.] That does not touch the question; it alters some questions, but not this one. The question we are considering is how far the fall in prices should affect the rent. It does not matter who built the house so long as a man continues to live in it. Well, that is the case with the big farmer; therefore, in the case of the big farmer the House will perceive how inaccurate—how misleading—was the argument advanced a short time ago. Now, take the case of the man who is most to be pitied in Ireland, and whom this House desires particularly to relieve—the case of the small tenant. He works his farm himself; it therefore matters nothing to him whether the price of labour rises or falls. The cost of cultivation is of little importance to him, because he buys comparatively little for the farm, and hires little labour. That is the first item. The second item is that of lodging or house room. How many tenants in Ireland are there paying under £4 a-year? I have not got the figures before me, but I know there is an enormous number of tenants under £4. What does £4 yearly rent mean? The common house rent in England is 2*s.* 6*d.* a week; that is what the ordinary English agricultural labourer is in the habit of paying for his house. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] As far as I know, the average rent paid by the English labourer for his house is 2*s.* 6*d.* a-week; 2*s.* 6*d.* a-week is £6 10*s.* a-year, so that the English labourer pays for his cottage 50 per cent more than the small Irish tenants of whom I am speaking pay for their holdings. I do not say that the Irish houses are good; but that is not the point. The point is that the people are living where they wish; they do not desire to live anywhere else; but if they did they would have to pay £6 10*s.* for their houses instead of £4, which they now pay for their holdings. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] That is so. If they leave their tenancies in Ireland, and emigrate to England, to Scotland, or to America, they would undoubtedly pay, merely for a roof over them, more than they actually pay now for their holdings. I quite admit that does not show they have got their holdings at a fair price; but it shows that one of the great advantages they get in their holdings is not altered one way or another by the diminution in prices. That, I imagine, is absolutely correct. There remains the element of the sustentation food of the tenants. The small Irish tenants live almost entirely on the produce of their holdings. Again, therefore, it matters not to them in the slightest degree, so far as food is concerned, whether prices rise or fall. But they have to clothe themselves, and, so far as clothing is concerned, the fall in prices is entirely in their favour. They gain instead of lose by that fall in price. There, therefore, remains only that part of their produce which they are obliged to sell in order to pay the rents to their landlords. If in 1882 they had to sell so many quarters of oats to pay rent, under the provisions of our Bill they will have to sell precisely the same number of quarters of oats, though the quarters of oats in 1887 fetch very much smaller prices than they may have done in 1882 and 1883. Therefore, so far as rent is concerned, the small Irish tenant can in no way suffer if our clause be passed, and in every other respect he gains by the fall of prices. I am afraid I have detained the House at too great length; but I thought this question ought to be cleared up as far as I am capable of clearing it up. I think I have clearly laid before the House the grounds upon which I distinctly hold that, while this arrangement is not unfair to the larger tenants, it is more than fair, it is generous, to the smaller tenants, who live chiefly on the produce of their holdings. There was another proposal—and this is the last word I shall say on the subject—there was another proposal in the very able speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain). I confess that the suggestion made was one of an extremely attractive character, and my objection to it is not so much as to the object which it was intended to obtain by that Amendment as to the impossibility of acting on it. There is one particular objection I may mention, which is that if the suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham were carried out, rents for one year would be fixed on the principle of rents fixed for 15 years. That is an essential element of his proposition, and that would, though I do not think the criticism of very great importance, so far as it goes, tell against the tenant, and not in favour of him. The reduction in other years that would be got by the Court fixing the rent for 15 years would probably be smaller than the rent fixed for one year. That is only a theoretical objection; but I think there are objections of a practical character against the proposal he made to us. His suggestion amounted to this —that the head Land Commission should be directed to fix such rents for holdings the rent of which had been previously fixed between 1882 and 1885 as would be fixed if the holdings were coming for the first time before the Court. That was substantially the proposal. But how is the Land Commission to proceed to carry out the directions which the right hon. Gentleman proposes to give it? The first method they would naturally pursue or think of pursuing would be to examine each holding on its merits. But that is clearly out of the question. I am sure the right hon. Gentleman would not himself wish to press any suggestion on the House which would have that result. The right hon. Gentleman knows that what we desire to obtain is a rough-and-ready plan which can be instantly set in motion, and which will deal with the rents falling due in September and November next. That is what we want, and that is inconsistent with the plan which would require the Land Commission to make a separate examination of each holding. Then, if the Commission is not to examine each holding, how is it to proceed? There are, so far as I know, two possible, and only two possible, methods of proceeding. The first is for the Commission to take as its guide the decision arrived at by the Sub-Commission in the years 1886-7, subsequent to the fall in prices. But, Sir, the decisions of the Sub-Commission, however excellent the Sub-Commission may be as a Court of First Instance, are, in many respects, judging by the alterations that have been made in those decisions, occasionally extremely eccentric, and in no sense to be trusted. Then, if you object to this method—if you refuse to take this course on the ground that I have suggested—you are drawn back to the decision of the head Commission. But the decisions of the head Commission in 1886 and 1887 are so few and are so scattered, and scattered so unequally and so arbitrarily over the country—if I may use the expression—that you might have a large area in which there is no indication, or only a very faint indication, of the kind of reduction that ought to be made; and you may have other areas in which there is no indication as to a reduction at all. Therefore, I do not see how the Land Commission, dealing with this matter on the principle suggested by the right hon. Gentleman, would have before them adequate *data* on which to proceed in determining the question. I would point out to the House that, even if there were more decisions than there are, there must be great inequality and injustice in such a proposal, because it is a mistake to suppose that every estate in a given area—in, say, a Poor Law Union — is over-rented in the same degree. The rents are fixed on an entirely different scale. If, therefore, a landlord happens to have property in the neighbourhood of the estate as to which there has been a recent decision giving a very large reduction — a reduction, perhaps, of an excessive rent—however moderate his rent may be, however good the terms may be on which he lives with his tenants, or however thoughtful he may be of their interests in fixing the rents, the owner of that estate would find himself cut down beyond his deserts for no greater crime than that of having a neighbour who was a bad landlord. And precisely the same thing might happen through living in the neighbourhood of a good landlord. Suppose the case of a good landlord whose tenants went into the Court in 1886, and whose rents had been cut down, say, 15 per cent. In his neighbourhood there is a certain harsh landlord whose tenants have not been able to go into Court because of arrears. The rents of this harsh landlord ought, perhaps, to be cut down; but that would not be simply because he happened to live in the neighbourhood of a good landlord. Therefore, if the House proceeds on the attractive principle suggested by the right hon. Gentleman—namely, of trying to put every tenant in the same position under the clause as if he were going for the first time before the Land Commission—you will be putting the Land Commission in the great difficulty of deciding in some cases without adequate *data* at all, and in other cases of being compelled to choose as their *data*, *data* which is misleading and inequitable. Well, Sir, I have pressed what I had to say within the very smallest compass. I have given, I hope, reasons why the Government must adhere to the Amendment they moved in the House of Lords, and I hope the House will not withdraw the support which it has already give to the Bill.

Mr. MAHONY (Meath, N.): The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland will possibly remember that when this clause was before the House in Committee, I moved an Amendment with the object of endeavouring to prevent an injustice which would certainly have taken place under the clause as it originally stood. The Amendment I moved was framed to prevent the Land Commission from being tied down to fix rents according to the difference in prices of two particular years. I pointed out that that would be a great injustice to the tenants who had their rents fixed in the year 1885. The answer I received from the right hon. Gentleman was that under this clause the Land Commissioners had a very fair, equitable jurisdiction; that they were not tied down; and that their discretion was so large that I need not fear any of the dangers which I asserted I foresaw. What has become of this equitable jurisdiction now? The right hon. Gentleman, by the Amendment which he supports to-night, proposes absolutely to take away from the Land Commission all discretion whatever. Does the right hon. Gentleman deny that? Where is his desire now to deny what I saw would certainly come to the tenants who had their rents fixed in 1885? The only answer he had when I pointed that out was that the Land Commission had large powers, and could exercise a large discretion, and that they were not tied down in any way; and now he proposes to bind them hand and foot. He gives us an example of a farm where the produce amounts to the value of £99, and he proceeds to split that amount up into three equal portions. Does he suppose that there is a single farm from the extreme North of Ireland to the extreme South where the working expenses do not exceed more than one-third of the value of the produce? Instead of taking the example given by the right hon. Gentleman, I would take one that was very fairly put by Lord Spencer a short time ago. Lord Spencer said—

> "Let us suppose that the gross produce of a farm valued at £500, and that it costs £300 to produce that—that leaves £200."

[*Laughter.*] An hon. Member opposite laughs. I say it may cost him £300 to produce his £500. If the hon. Member who laughs knows anything about farming—I do not know what county or borough he represents—but if he knows anything about farming, I ask him to go into any tillage county and point out to me a single farm on which the produce does not cost two-thirds of the receipts to grow.

An hon. MEMBER: That would be through bad management.

MR. MAHONY: Why, it is notorious in this country—and anyone who knows anything at all about tillage is acquainted with the fact—that the cost of production swallows up all the profit. There are districts where the landlords cannot get tenants for their farms for the very reason that the cost of production reaches such a pitch that there is no margin of profit for the farmers. The hon. Member laughs when I say that a farmer whose produce is worth £500 often has to spend £300 in producing his crops; but that simply shows the hon. Member's utter ignorance of the whole subject. I return to my example—namely, where produce worth £500 costs £300 in production. That leaves £200 to be divided between the landlord and the tenant. I will divide that amount equally for the sake of argument. We will suppose that the rent is £100. If prices fall 20 per cent the gross produce of the farm is only worth £400 instead of £500, and that leaves only £100 instead of £200 to be divided between the landlord and tenant. Now, according to the right hon. Gentleman's arrangement, £80 of that is to go to the landlord, and the tenant is only to get £20. Is that a fair division, and yet it is absolutely what will take place under the right hon. Gentleman's clause? The right hon. Gentleman says the cost of cultivation has fallen and the cost of machinery has fallen. Well, I admit that the cost of production has fallen slightly during the past few years—it increased very slightly before that; but it has again fallen slightly, very slightly, and if it were not for the fact that the cost of production has fallen slightly, you could not make any reduction without doing away with the rent altogether; and even if you abolished rents the majority of farms in Ireland would be unworkable. You could not work them at a profit. The mere fact that the tenants are able to live on some of these farms at all is absolutely due to the cost of production being somewhat less than it was. The right hon. Gentleman says that a great many farmers in Ireland are merely labourers, and he compares them to English agricultural labourers, who pay 2*s*. 6*d*. a-week for their cottages. But what is the condition of the English agricultural labourer? Where does he live? Why, in a district where he can get work. But in Ireland the state of things is entirely different. There the poor man cannot work; he cannot earn wages; he cannot make a living, except on his own holding; and if it were not that he has the advantage of being able to consume a certain amount of the produce of his own farm, and therefore, to that extent, is not affected by the fall in prices, he would not be able to exist at all. Now let us go from the particular cases which come under this clause to some others. The right hon. Gentleman himself alluded to the case of the large grazier who buys his stock at a lower price than formerly. Although the large grazier buys his stock at a smaller price, the right hon. Gentleman proposes to give him exactly the same reduction—exactly and identically the same reduction—which he proposes to give to the tillage farmer. Whether the cost of production is lessened or not, does he contend that that cost of production on tillage farms in Ireland is not greater than the cost of production on the grazing farms? I defy any hon. Gentleman opposite to get up and contend that. Very well; the right hon. Gentleman proposes to give this class of farmer exactly the same reduction as the other. The tillage farmer, with his large cost of production and his small margin of the profit, is to get exactly the same reduction as the grazier with his comparatively small cost of production and his comparatively large margin of profit. The two are to be treated in identically the same way. Sir, the idea is absurd. I commend to the notice of hon. and gallant Gentlemen opposite who represent Northern constituencies the fact that the cost of the production of an acre of flax is very nearly two-thirds of the value of the product, and yet the man who grows flax is to get precisely the same protection as, and no more than, the grazier who is producing beef. Take the case of two different classes of dairy farms. You have in one district all the dairy farms producing three firkins of butter to the cow. In another district you have them producing one and a-half firkins of butter to the cow. Well, it must be clear to everybody who considers the matter for a second that it must cost more to produce the butter where one cow only yields one and a-half firkins than where three firkins to the cow is the rule. There is infinitely more labour in the one case than in the other. One dairymaid can only attend to about 10 cows, and in the one case 10 cows will only produce 15 firkins of butter, whilst in the other case they will yield 30 firkins. The cost of production, therefore, is nearly double. The margin of profit will be very much less on the poor land, where only one and a-half firkins per cow are produced, yet the right hon. Gentleman applies exactly the same scale of reduction to both cases; and then he tells us that he has particularly at heart the interests of the smaller farmers of Ireland. The fact of the matter is that this Amendment takes away any value there was in the clause. The clause was always unjust; it was always absurd; it was always ludicrous, it always had the mark on the face of it that it was drawn by men who knew nothing about what they were at. But now it is proposed to increase that injustice; it is proposed to make it a more monstrous injustice. The Government propose by this clause to give to the tenants a reduction that will be utterly inadequate; and I have no hesitation in saying that the tenants would be much better off without this clause at all. Why, I do not believe there are 10 landlords in the whole of Ireland who would dare to refuse to give their tenants the reduction—the miserable reduction—that this clause will give them as it is now proposed to amend it. Almost every landlord would offer his tenants 10 per cent reduction in these times, or even 15 per cent. Why, Colonel O'Callaghan did that—even Colonel O'Callaghan. If such a man could give his tenants a reduction like that, I think we may reasonably suppose that the majority of Irish landlords would do it. You will say that you have given some reduction; that you have done something for the tenants; but, as a matter of fact, you will have made the rents far worse—you will have taken away with one hand what you gave with the other. I hate shams. [*Cheers.*] Yes; I hate sham concessions; and I will vote against this Amendment because it is an utter and ludicrous sham. Not only that; but I am thankful to be able to believe that the tenant farmers of England in the county constituencies will be able to see through this sham as well as the Irish tenants. I shall devote, I hope, a good part of next week in trying to enable the tenant farmers in a certain county division of this country to see through this sham concession which a Tory Government offers us. It is exactly the sort of concession I should have expected from a Tory Government. I am not in the least disappointed this evening; and if the Government imagine that the tenant farmers of Ireland are in the least likely to be satisfied with such a concession, either in the North of Ireland or in the South, they are very much mistaken. If this is all the Government intend to do for the Irish tenant farmers, it will be the old story over again, and the Irish tenant farmer must take the best means he can to protect himself.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): I cannot help saying that I think the House of Commons is doing the deadliest night's work, so far as Ireland is concerned, of the whole Session. They have done work to-night which will bear the most lamentable fruit throughout Ireland before this House meets for another Session. I particularly lament and regret this night's work, and I particularly lament and regret that many of those with whom I usually act in this House have been parties to this work. What, Sir, is the use in connection with a country like Ireland talking about hundreds of pounds expenditure on the working of a farm? Will this House please to recognize the kind of people they are dealing with? Will they look at the fact that they are dealing with a mass of small farmers? Will they take one example showing how this House of Lords' Amendment will work out? Take the case of a man paying a rent of £10 a-year, the saleable produce of whose farm amounts to £40. Now, suppose the Land Commission comes to the conclusion that there has been a fall of 20 per cent in the price of agricultural produce, what does that mean? It means that he is to get an abatement of £2 a-year on his rent, whilst he has lost £8 through the fall in prices. Bind the Land Commissioners to a proposition like that, and you take away from them at the bidding of the House of Lords the equitable jurisdiction which you yourselves placed in their hands. What else do you do? You do not take into account at all the question of yield or produce. You are going to tie the hands of the Land Commissioners to consider simply the question of prices. Well, in a single part of my own constituency last year some of the farmers were absolutely ruined at the close of the harvest by floods. You do not allow the Land Commissioners to take the slightest account of yield or produce, and you fix them to a hard-and-fast line regarding prices. I say this proposal will break in your hands. It cannot possibly do justice. Now, what is the excuse for altering this clause? We are told of some letter that has come from the Land Commission—we are told that three gentlemen — three highly paid officers of the State—object to have this discretion thrust upon them. I heard nothing of this objection in 1881, when the Commissioners were let loose upon every farm in Ireland. The Commissioners were willing enough to take the responsibility then. What has come over them since? Has the presence of Mr. Frederick Wrench had any effect in making them cautious as to what powers they should have? I say that the Commissioners, who were able in 1881 to decree what was a fair rent, ought to be able in 1887 to decree what is a fair rent under the circumstances of the economic revolution that has overtaken landlord and tenant alike in Ireland. Now, there is another thing I should like to point out. The landlords in Ireland are screaming that they are going to be absolutely ruined by this discretion which is to be vested in the Land Commission. Why, there has not been a single sale under Lord Ashbourne's Purchase Act where the tenant has not got an abatement of 20 per cent on his judicial rent. Both the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) and the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland have given their opinion as to the value of this Bill which we are now discussing in its final stage. I do not now wish to detain the House more than a few minutes, but I intend to give my opinion. I say that when it came down to this House it was a Bill that would have been practically useless. In this House it was made into a most valuable Bill—a Bill that would have been a great boon to the tenant farmers of Ireland. What you have done is that you first of all allowed the hon. and learned Gentleman who represents Trinity College (Mr. Serjeant Madden) to strike a deadly blow at the Leasehold Clause; then you sent up the Bill to the House of Lords, and you have allowed the House of Lords to strike a still more deadly blow at the Revision of Rent Clause. You have allowed a most valuable Bill in the closing days of the Session to be whittled down. I do not say that it will not be useful; I do not say that it will not be a boon to the farmers of Ireland; but I say you have raised hopes in the breasts of the tenant farmers of Ireland that you have quenched by your action to night, or rather that you have allowed the House of Lords to quench. I deny the right of the House of Lords, composed exclusively of landlords, to make ducks and drakes of a Bill like this passed by the Representatives of the people.

Colonel SAUNDERSON (Armagh, N.): I will not detain the House more than a moment or two; but as I belong to the unhappy class which has come under the reprobation of the hon. Gentleman opposite perhaps I may be allowed to say a word about the position I occupy now, which presumably many hon. Members in this House desire to occupy in the future. As a landlord I have listened all through these debates with anxious expectation to hear some definite statement on the part of hon. Gentlemen above the Gangway opposite, as to what the landlord ought to receive. As far as I can make out from the expressions of opinion which have come from hon. Gentlemen below, and sometimes from hon. Gentlemen above the Gangway, the landlord ought to be kept in Ireland as a sort of ornamental individual, receiving no rent, and perhaps paying the poor rate and county cess. The hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell) and the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) pretty well agree that this Bill will be almost useless——

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL: I did not say that.

Colonel SAUNDERSON: Well, the hon. Member believes it will be almost useless, and the hon. Member for Cork believes it will be altogether useless. The hon. Member for South Tyrone thinks it will be of some use.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: Will the hon. and gallant Gentleman allow me to explain? I said the Bill was a most valuable Bill when it left this House, but that it had been whittled down since. I did not say that it will not be of use, but I maintained that it has been deprived of a great deal of its value.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON: I am glad to hear the hon. Member say that; but the hon. Member for Cork, whose speech I should like to make a few remarks upon, stated that, so far as he was concerned—I think it was he who said it—he would just as soon not have the Bill at all as have it in its present form. He said that the principle of regulating rent on the scale of prices to accommodate the amount of the fall which has taken place is an absolutely illusory method. He says that it is a method which will not give any satisfaction to the Irish tenants.

MR. PARNELL: I did not say that.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON: I think it will be in the recollection of the House—it certainly is within my recollection—that, time after time, day after day, we heard from the hon. Gentleman opposite the fact stated, that it was the fall in prices that necessitated the revision of rents. Well, I admitted the fall in prices then, and I admit it now—I admit that there is a great deal to be said in favour of making the landlord suffer when a fall in prices takes place. Now, when the Government propose to take the fall of prices as the basis of reduction, and to accede to the aguments used so repeatedly this Session and last Session by hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway opposite, they scout the proposal with derision, and they say such a Bill as this never could satisfy the Irish tenants. The fact is that no Bill brought in by any responsible Government, unless it is brought in by a Government composed of Gentlemen like the right hon. Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt), who would do anything to destroy the class to which I belong, would ever satisfy hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway. Those hon. Gentlemen do not mean the Irish tenants to be satisfied. Even before this Bill was altered in "another place," the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) very distinctly stated that he intended to go over to Ireland to show the Irish tenants what a delusion and a snare the Bill was for them. Now, the fall in prices is to be the basis of the reduction. What has the fall in prices been? As far as I have been able to ascertain, it has been roughly from 15 to 20 per cent. If the rents are reduced 15 or 20 per cent, or whatever the fall may have been, I cannot see that the tenants who enjoy the reduction could look upon it as anything else but a great and satisfactory concession to them. What will the effect be of the fall in prices? Now, 176,800 tenants have come into Court, and had a judicial rent fixed. The former rent of these tenants amounted to £3,227,000, and the judicial rent amounted, in the year 1886, to £2,638,000. If the whole of the tenants of Ireland, numbering 564,235, came into Court, and if their rents were fixed, as they probably would be fixed, on the same principle as those of other tenants who came into Court, the result would be that the judicial rent in Ireland would come up to £9,312,000. The valuation of live stock and produce in Ireland in the year 1886 was £77,468,000, and the valuation of the crops was £28,986,000—that is to say, a sum of over £106,000,000. Out of that the landlords would receive £9,312,000 in judicial rent. That does not appear to me to be an exceedingly great amount to give to the landlords out of the value of the stock and crops of Ireland. [*Ironical cheers.*] I am perfectly well aware that would never satisfy hon. Gentlemen opposite; it would never satisfy the tenants who joined the Plan of Campaign. Let me give an instance. The House will remember the long debates which took place in respect to the Woodford evictions, with which the name of Father Fahy was associated. On the Woodford estate there was a tenant named Egan, who held a farm of 16 acres, whose rent was £8 15*s.* This unfortunate man could not pay, and he was turned out. After he was turned out, he prosecuted the landlord for the value of the crops he had left behind, the value of which was £60. Besides this, he had six head of cattle, which, probably, were worth £20 or £30 more. When the Judge asked him why, in these circumstances, he could not pay £8 15*s.* rent, he was not able to give a satisfactory answer. I should like some hon. Gentleman opposite to say what he thinks a tenant like this man Egan ought to have paid his landlord. I cannot think that £8 15*s.* was an outrageous amount for a landlord to ask from a tenant who had property to the value of nearly £100. The hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) in his speech to-night—the most valuable speech the hon. Member has made in this or last Session—has more than amply justified what we have said over and over again—namely, that the hon. Member and his Friends do not mean the tenants of Ireland to be satisfied with any arrangement that this House was likely to make. It is not a reduction of rent they seek, but it is the annihilation of a class. I have already made quotations from a speech made by an hon. Member for one of the Divisions of Cork, in which he said he would go on until the landlords were in the last ditch. I suppose that meant until the landlord had no more rent paid to him. That is what hon. Members aim at. They know perfectly well that this House will never give them what they want, and therefore they go on keeping the pot of Irish agitation seething and frothing, because they float on the froth. The hon. Member for Cork said he would rather not have this Bill, because then the Irish tenants would resort, as they have resorted in former times, to a desperate agitation—to another Plan of Campaign more formidable than the last. Yes; the Plan of Campaign was formidable last year; but if another desperate Plan of Campaign is commenced this year, it must be remembered that the Criminal Law Amendment Bill has been passed. Well, I have myself some experience of Irish tenants. In the Division I have the honour to represent, the tenants have told me over and over again that what they want is a reduction of rent in conformity with the reduction of prices; and I feel perfectly certain that the tenants in the Division I represent, and the tenants all over Ireland, where they dare to be satisfied, will say that a Bill which proposes to reduce rents in conformity with the fall in prices is a Bill which confers an immeasurable boon upon the tenants of Ireland.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): I think it is greatly to be regretted that we should have to deal with this important question at this hour of the morning (1.10). Nobody will say for a moment that the case of the Irish tenant should be allowed to expire practically in a padded Chamber like this, at 1 o'clock in the morning, or like a frog under an exhaust air-pump. We cannot agree to allow the case of the Irish tenant to be done to death in the dark; and, Sir, I was never more astonished in my life than when the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Gibson) got up, and in the most perfunctory way, as if he was moving one of the motions in the Law Court paid for at the rate of a guinea a-piece, moved that the House do agree with the Lords' Amendments; no one would imagine that the right hon. and learned Gentleman was thereby giving the death-blow to the hopes of nearly 250,000 tenants in Ireland. What did we expect? We expected that inasmuch as the Government refused to make us any concession as regards the Town Park Clauses, they would never move to agree with the Lords' Amendments in this matter. The hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh (Colonel Saunderson) tells us we never shall be satisfied. Why do you not leave the Bill as it was? If you had left the Bill as it was sent by this House to the House of Lords, you would never have had a bit of this debate. And as to our never being satisfied, what do you think we move Amendments for? Is it for the purpose of getting them rejected? You tell us it is impossible to satisfy us; but you reject every reasonable Amendment that we devise in this House. One great misfortune of the present position is that, thinking as we did that the second Amendment of the Lords was about to be rejected, we abstained advisably from putting Amendments on the Paper. See to what that tends. The right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) in his bland manner, and without a dream of the importance of the discussion or the effects of his action, moves that the Question be now put. Now, I must say that the Irish Representatives will be placed in a most unfortunate position if, when the Government have misled them as we suppose by inference, the Rules of this House are going to be availed of to quash and crush adequate debate in this House. I think we are entitled to proper discussion, representing, as we do, the Irish people. Nobody will deny that when my hon. Friend the Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) speaks in this House, and he is supported by such hon. Gentlemen as the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell), the voice of the tenants of Ireland has not been heard. We have now come to a most serious position of affairs, a position in which, at least, I say, we are entitled for time in which to think. We claim this time. We claim time to enable us to put down Amendments to this clause. We had supposed you were going to disagree with the Lords, and, having so supposed, it would have been bad tactics on our part to put down Amendments, as if our Amendments were all that we needed to make to the clause. Amendments would only be put down to mitigate the effects of the clause, and therefore we would have deluded the House had we placed Amendments on the Paper. We claim that, in the first instance, this important question shall be relegated to another Sitting; that the people of England, as well as the people of Ireland, shall have an opportunity of judging of the importance of the matter; and that our Amendments shall have some chance of a reception by a House other than a jaded and weary House such as is now listening to us. Now, Sir, allow me to tell the House—and perhaps the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) will do me the favour of believing that I speak with sincerity—that in my judgment this present year in Ireland will be the worst year for farmers since the time of the famine. That may seem an extreme statement; but I state without fear of contradiction that, bad as the year of 1879 was for the Irish farmers the year 1887 will be twice as bad, three times as bad, although, happily, you will not have the starvation you had at the time of the famine, because the mercy of Providence has been such that, whereas in the famine time, owing to the fact that the potato crop failed, it failed in congested districts, in poor districts in the West of Ireland, and upon the bad land, this time—and it is a curious thing to say—it is upon some of the most boggy and miserable farms that the crops have been good. Therefore, I do not think even in the West of Ireland you will have absolute starvation; but, as far as dearth goes, this year will be the worst year which has elapsed since 1847. Only last Saturday I was in the market in the City of Waterford, and I saw a man bring oats to the market unthrashed. It would not pay to thrash them, and he sold the produce of some acres for 5*s.* or 10*s.* You have fields of potatoes in splendid bloom—champion potatoes on which the country of late years has so much relied—but yielding scarcely anything at all. The manure never rotted, and potatoes no bigger than marbles have been produced. The turnip crop has failed. The crop of mangel-wurzels has been good, but oats in many places will not pay for the growing. You may ask how is this relevant to the Amendment. You must have, while you have dearth, a rise in price. What has happened? In the City of Cork market you have 40,000 fewer firkins of butter than you had this time last year. Butter was selling last year at 5*d.* and 6*d.* per lb. Similar butter is now fetching 1*s.* per lb. What good is that, however, to the man who has not got it, and yet the Land Commission is to have regard to the present price of butter, and is to have no regard to the yield? The Midland Railway Company in Ireland have carried 2,000 tons of butter less this year than last. What does this mean to the poor devils in the South of Ireland? It means wretchedness and starvation and eviction. The price of the article of butter alone has doubled, and the Land Commission is to have regard to the price. What about the yield? Is no account to be taken of that? Am I to be told that if a man has no potatoes he is to get no redress—his rent is not to be reduced? If you read this clause you will find it is one which enables rents to be raised. There is not a single word in the clause about the reduction of rent. The word used is "vary" or adjust the rent. There is nothing about reduction. So that a poor man whose butter has gone up 2*d.* or 3*d.* or 4*d.* a lb. is to have his rent raised accordingly, though he has not got the butter at all. [*Laughter.*] I can tell hon. Gentlemen opposite who laugh that they would not laugh if they saw the only two or three acres of ground on which their cow was dependent turned into a gravelled walk through the absence of rain. In some districts of Ireland there is not now even water enough for a man to wash his face with. I maintain that for the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General for Ireland to treat this matter in a *Nisi Prius* sort of way is a degradation of Parliamentary procedure. I claim for the tenants of Ireland some consideration in their present position. For my part, I have never varied. I have taken a much stronger view than some of my Colleagues with regard to this Bill. From the very moment the Government made their intention clear I have been in favour of the rejection of the Bill. My opposition to the Bill has been intensified by the way in which the Government have dealt with the leaseholders, for they have refused to include any leaseholders of over 99 years. It is absurd for the Government to use the arguments they have used, and then to accept the Amendment of the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for the University of Dublin (Mr. Serjeant Madden) robbing the tenant of his improvements. You have gone from bad to worse, and now you have come to the last straw which breaks the camel's back. There are some 500,000 tenants in Ireland, and I think that some 30,000 of them will receive benefit under this Bill. If I were asked my candid opinion, I would say I am not prepared to sacrifice the rights of 500,000 for the sake of 30,000 tenants, and for why? Because, as my hon. Friend the Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) has said, if the tenants only wait they will get another and a better Bill. There were no truer words, and they are words which will be always remembered by the Irish people, than those spoken by my hon. Friend (Mr. Parnell) at Ennis in 1880. My hon. Friend said to the Irish people at that time—

> "Remember that the measure of the Land Bill that you will get next year will be measured by your exertions in the present year;"

and I say to the Irish people that it will be better for them to put up with the severe suffering they may have to endure from the fact that this Bill will not pass or may not pass if this Amendment is insisted upon, knowing very well that with the flood tide which is coming in they must get a better Bill next year. We are not in a position now to consider the present state of Ireland. We are in the month of August, and the people are hand feeding their cattle. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] Hon. Gentlemen do not understand the matter. But it is nevertheless a fact that in the best month of summer, when everything should be green, the cattle have nothing to eat and are gasping for water. What will it be next winter when they have no food, or when food has doubled or trebled in price? The Commissioners have only to have regard to the price. I say that a solemn moment is coming to the Irish people in consequence of the brutal manner in which this Amendment has been dealt with on the Treasury Bench, and I am surprised at the right hon. and learned Attorney General for Ireland—a gentleman who, I suppose, we shall soon see administering equity to the Irish people, and before whom tenants may have to go under this Bill—I am sorry he should have attempted, I will not say to hoodwink, but to delude the House by treating this question as if it is of no importance. It is nothing of the sort, and, under these circumstances, my vote would be given for the rejection of the Bill if the question were directly before the House. I would prefer that the Irish tenants should wait, say, until next February or March, to see what their organization will do in the meantime. I am not a bit afraid of the Coercion Bill to which the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for North Armagh has referred. All you can do is to put us into gaol, and we will come out again at the end of six months, and when we come out we shall know what it is all about, for we shall have seen the whole show. And let me tell you that the temper of the Irish tenants when we do come out will not be a bit improved, and the landlords will not get very much rent. How much rent have you got out of the tenants since a tenant was asked in the Bankruptcy Court if he had given any money to a certain priest? The man said, "I refuse to answer." Indeed, he preferred to take his imprisonment rather than be supposed to be a spy or an informer. That is the spirit you have to deal with those people in, and, what is more, that is the spirit in which you have to deal with their Leaders in. It is absurd to tell the House, because the House has heard it before, that the Bill on which you place so much reliance will subdue the feelings of the Irish people. I claim that further time be given to the consideration of this Amendment. We have arrived at a moment of supreme gravity. The crisis is not to be met by the Motion that the Question be now put. That will settle nothing. I maintain that the Government are bound to listen to the demands we make upon them. They agreed apparently with the Liberal Unionists some weeks ago for a certain thing, and they now propose to go back upon it. Most of the Liberal Unionists are out of town, and the Government declare that they yielded not because it was just, but as the son of the Prime Minister informed us, improving upon his respected parent's words, because they could not help it. He condemned it, but he would not vote against it. Such is the consistency of the noble family of Cecil. Such being the facts, the Liberal Unionist Party are bound to have, as well as we are, further time to see whether some compromise cannot be made. I am willing to defer the strong opinion I have in favour of dropping this Bill in deference to the strong opinion that some other people may have. I know the hon. Gentleman the Member for South Tyrone has a strong opinion of the great value of this Bill, and I would be to some extent willing to see whether some agreement could not be patched up between the Liberal Unionist Party and the Government which may be satisfactory to us. I admit that the proper time for moving the rejection of the Bill is the third reading stage. We cannot make that Motion now. We have passed that stage, yet by the Forms of this House Amendments can be introduced after the third reading in "another place" practically embodying perfectly new propositions, and they can be dealt with by simply putting a single Question from the Chair, and without them undergoing a first, second, or third reading, or the Committee stage. Such are the Forms of this noble Assembly. Under these circumstances, we claim time for consideration. We claim time to enable our Amendments to be placed on the Paper, so that they may be read and understood by Members of the House. I will not make any Motion, but I rely upon the fact that the Government must see that a crisis of enormous gravity is at hand. This is not merely a question for the present. We may get through the winter. Under these circumstances, I think the case is one for the Government to allow further time for consideration. I trust the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury will not make up his mind, or that it will not be so impervious to argument that it will not be possible for an additional day's argument to move it. I believe it would be possible for another day's argument to move it. At any rate, I think the time has arrived for us to adjourn this discussion. It would be very desirable for the Government at once, without further demur, to agree to a Motion to that effect. I will not move it myself, because I think it would be better that it should come from the Government—I believe it would be better for them to consent to an adjournment without demur in view of the extraordinary importance of the question before the House.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): The hon. and learned Member probably is not aware of the fact that an arrangement was come to to the effect that the Lords' Amendments should be taken on Friday, and concluded in the course of the week. He is not aware, probably, of the fact that an appeal was made to us by hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway that the consideration of the Amendments should be postponed, and that we agreed to postpone them until to-day. There has been an interval of six days—an interval of six days at the end of the Session, or what ought to be the end of the Session—to give hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway a full opportunity of considering all the bearings of the Motion before the House.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I explained my reason.

MR. W. H. SMITH: The hon. and learned Gentleman has given some explanation of his position; but it would be impossible for the Government to accede to his appeal as to the necessity for further adjournment under the present circumstances. We are passing the Bill as rapidly as possible as vital to the interests of Ireland. We are unable to accept the view the hon.

and learned Member takes, nor can we take the view of his Friends in the matter. I listened with great interest to the speech of the hon. and learned Gentleman with regard to the condition of a large part of Ireland. I deplore quite as much as he can deplore the partial failure of crops in some districts in Ireland; but for the House to refuse to pass the Bill will not aid any of the unfortunate tenants. It will not extend to them any relief or advantage, while it will deny to a large number of persons the relief and advantage that we are most anxious to confer. We believe that the operation of this provision will be a beneficial operation upon those to whom it is to be applied. We believe that it will meet the necessities of the case, and that with the other provisions of the Bill it will tend largely to satisfy the tenantry, and that it will conduce to peace during the coming winter. We cannot consent to further delay, but feel bound to ask the House to dispose of the Lords' Amendments to-night.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby): I listened to the speech of the hon. and learned Member (Mr. T. M. Healy) who asked for delay, and to the speech of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell), and I think those speeches must have satisfied everyone of the gravity of the question with which we are dealing. The whole tenantry of Ireland are affected by the change made in the Bill in the House of Lords—the change in a most vital particular—by which, in our opinion, you have given a test and standard of reduction of rent which is utterly useless and valueless for the purposes you propose. As was said just now, what is the use of applying the test of high prices or of low prices, utterly irrespective of the question of whether a man has a crop or not? Whether or not the distress of a tenant should justify the lowering of his rent is a question which ought to be fully argued out. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) has already said that if there is delay in this matter it is the fault of the Government, and of the Government alone. If they took this view of the question which they now put forward, why did they not state it in the House of Commons when they had the Bill before them? Why did they wait until the Bill went up to the House of Lords to make this change? It was on the 6th of August that the Bill left the House of Commons—on a Saturday. It was fully expected that the Government would have introduced it on the Monday in the House of Lords. If they had stuck to their own Bill and maintained their own proposals on the 8th August, the Bill would have been the law of the land by this time. Yet now, on the 18th August—10 days afterwards—the right hon. Gentleman opposite comes down and tells the House of Commons that it is their fault that the Bill has not passed into law. I have no hesitation in saying that, having regard to the importance of this question, to the vitality of the changes the Government have, at their own instance, made in the House of Lords, the discussion that has taken place to-night, having only occupied about two and a-half hours, is totally inadequate and disproportionate. We are helpless in this matter. The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House (Mr. W. H. Smith) has one argument—a very conclusive argument—if he has determined that this question so vitally affecting the interests of Ireland has been sufficiently discussed, let him at once have recourse to that argument. That will be the best course for him to take; I invite him to take it. Let him tell this House, let him tell the country, that they have changed in a vital particular, and destroyed this measure in the opinion of the Representatives of the Irish people, and that they do not want the House of Commons to discuss the question unless it is discussed at half-past 1 or nearly 2 o'clock in the morning. Let them have the courage of their conduct, and we shall know exactly where we are in the matter. Let the right hon. Gentleman get up and move the clôture—I invite him to do it at once. The right hon. Gentleman has a policy with which he is satisfied. The right hon. Gentleman and his Friends are never satisfied of the wisdom and sagacity of their Irish policy until they have got it into such a situation that the voice of the Representatives of Ireland on both sides of the House, and the voice of Irishmen from every part of the country, and the voice of all men from every section of the community, are against them. Well, they have secured that proud position to-night—that is their policy—the Unionist policy. It has been followed by the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington); it has been followed by the Government. Whenever you have arrived at this position, that every Irish Representative from every part of the country, and all public opinion condemns a measure, then you carry it out. That is your policy to-night. Happily, at all events, we have got one voice from amongst the Liberal Unionists for us to-night. We have heard the opinion of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) upon the manner in which the Government and the House of Lords have dealt with this question. The last time the Bill was under discussion that right hon. Gentleman made two proposals with regard to the Amendments of the Lords; he made two proposals, and the Government rejected them with contempt. Let that also be put on record. Then the hon. Gentleman the Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell) has protested, from the midst of the Tory camp, against the policy of the Government. We have him, as well as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, who has divided, I think, steadily against the Government to-night upon their policy in regard to these Lords' Amendments. That being the case, and my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham having shown the vitality of the changes that you have made, and the Irish Members having demanded an opportunity for discussion and time for debate, you refuse that demand through the voice of the Leader of the House; then the responsibility must rest upon you. [" Hear, hear!" *from the Ministerial Benches.*] Oh, yes; you are very ready to accept that responsibility; but a good many of you do not know what it means. Your assent to the proposals contained in this Bill is a condemnation of your conduct 12 months ago. [*Cries of* " No, no!"] Are these not the proposals that were made 12 months ago? Did you not refuse to admit the leaseholders to the advantages of the Land Act, and are you not accepting that principle now, and do you not think it possible that in one month hence you may change your opinion with regard to the policy you are now adhering to? But that is not the main point. Hon. Members from Ireland have demanded time to debate this change, and you refuse it. I say that that is a refusal which it is impossible to justify in the mind of any right-thinking people. The debate on this subject did not begin until 12 o'clock; and do you think that this is a proper way to deal with such a question as that which is involved in this clause? For the present you have power—you can use it or abuse it, as you please; and the right hon. Gentleman on the Front Bench opposite can get up and move the clôture, if he likes. Let him do so. [" Hear, hear!" *from the Ministerial Benches.*] Yes; I see his supporters are ready. Let him move the clôture, and then we shall thoroughly understand the position. Let it be thoroughly and clearly understood throughout this country, as well as in Ireland, that you are not only prepared to refuse justice, but that you will not even allow an argument to be presented against you.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): The right hon. Gentleman opposite (Sir William Harcourt) is extremely anxious that the clôture should be put on before a word of reply is made to his speech; but, for once, he will be disappointed. The right hon. Gentleman has again pleaded for time. Let me remind him, as my right hon. Friend the First Lord of the Treasury reminded the hon. and learned Member for North Longford (Mr. T. M. Healy), of what happened before—namely, that it was in deference to a request which was made to us on a previous occasion that a postponement was made until to-day; and let me remind him, also, that if this question did not come up till half-past 11 o'clock, it was because the previous question was discussed at somewhat inordinate length. No doubt, this is an important Amendment; but when the right hon. Gentleman says that this is—to use his original expression—an Amendment which strikes at the vitality of the Bill—by which, I presume, he means the vital principle of the Bill—he was entirely in the wrong. We do not strike at, nor have we changed, any vital principle in the Bill; but the right hon. Gentleman conveniently omitted to mention the reason which led to the change in the House of Lords—namely, the request that was addressed to us by the

Land Commissioners. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] I wonder whether my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby approves of these interruptions which come from his Friends below the Gangway, seeing that he is so extremely sensitive to the slightest interruption himself? I trust that when next he addresses a lecture to those who sit on these Benches against the practice of interruption he will reserve some of his reprimands for his own Friends below the Gangway. I was speaking of the vital principle of the Bill, and I was saying that the Amendment to which exception is taken is an explanatory direction, given, as has been stated before, at the request of the Commissioners; therefore the whole of the right hon. Gentleman's argument falls to the ground—that argument in which he attributed every evil intention to the Government. Let us now see how the right hon. Gentleman has shifted his ground, following the lead which was set him by hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway. He said—"You have not considered the yield; you are only considering the prices; and it is because the yield is to be considered now that we ask for further time." Why, the Bill only deals with the question of prices. We were asked to deal with the question of prices, and we have dealt with the question of prices.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: No; you were asked to have regard to them.

Mr. GOSCHEN: It was having regard to prices that we were asked to make the change, and it is now having regard to prices that we have made the change. [Mr. T. M. Healy: No, no!] At all events, no one will contend that the whole argument throughout the discussion of this Bill has not been that. What we had to consider was the question of prices, and that we were to deal with the loss of the tenant from the fall in prices. Now, however, the hon. and learned Member for North Longford says that prices are beginning to rise in Ireland, and that we are to shift our ground; and we are asked to postpone the consideration of the Lords' Amendments, not in order to see whether this question of prices should be dealt with in another way, but to see——

Mr. T. M. HEALY: I only said let the clause alone.

Mr. GOSCHEN: Yes; but you do not want any time to consider the question as to yield in that case.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: If you will let the clause alone I will be satisfied.

Mr. GOSCHEN: The hon. and learned Gentleman asks now that we should again postpone this Bill and the consideration of this Amendment, after having postponed them already for a long time, in order that we may discuss a totally new question—namely, the question of yield. If this was not, what was the object of the speech of the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for North Longford? I say again that he has introduced a totally new principle, and wishes to raise an entirely new discussion. That is the old tactics of Gentlemen below the Gangway opposite. Having been met to a certain extent in one direction, and seeing that some satisfaction may come from the concessions which have been made, hon. Members shift their ground and ask for delay, in order to discuss a different matter. No; we are not going to give time to consider, and hon. Members know perfectly well that we cannot give time to consider, a totally new principle. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby says now that we are to introduce the principle of yield. Does he accept that statement? [Sir William Harcourt: No.] He does not accept that statement. He does not wish to consider the question of yield, and yet he places upon us responsibility in this matter in most grandiloquent language, because we do not answer the demand of the hon. and learned Member for North Longford, who is urging us to consider that question. I leave the right hon. Gentleman to settle that question with the hon. and learned Member for North Longford; but, as I said, we are unable to give further time. We consider that this matter has been fully discussed. There is not a single Member in this House who does not at this moment know that the whole question has been fully discussed, and we trust that the House will now come to an early decision with regard to it.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): I wish to recall this House to a recollection of the position in which we stand as to this particular Amendment. I must say that when the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Gibson) got up to-night there was not a single Member on these Benches, and I do not think there was a single Member above the Gangway on this side of the House—except, perhaps, a small troupe of Liberal Unionists who were taken into the confidence of the Government—who did not think that the right hon. and learned Gentleman was rising to ask the House to disagree with the Lords' Amendments, and I may say that the announcement of the intention of the Government with regard to the Amendment excited amongst Members on these Benches not only a feeling of surprise, but a feeling of absolute dismay. I am perfectly convinced that the majority of the public to-morrow, when they take up their papers, will be surprised to find that the Government have dealt with the Lords' Amendments in this manner. That is the position in which we were placed. We were taken by surprise and at a disadvantage. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who is a great hand at making the worse appear the better reason, and who is not particularly scrupulous as to the method in which he does it, said that the postponement of the consideration of this Amendment had been at our request. Might I ask the right hon. Gentleman who is responsible for the frequent delays which have taken place in the course of this Bill? Was it at our request that the House of Lords postponed the consideration of this Bill, which left us on Saturday morning, not to the next Monday, or the next Tuesday, but to the following Thursday? Then, again, was it at our request that the discussion on the decision of the Government was postponed from last Friday to the present Thursday? [*Cries of* "Yes!"] I dare say some who now say "Yes!" were enjoying themselves at the time at those sports from which I regret they have been called; but, as a matter of fact, the proposal was made by the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington).

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON (Lancashire, Rossendale): Perhaps the hon. Member will allow me to explain. The suggestion for the postponement had been made before the suggestion I offered on Friday that the other Amendments of the Lords should be gone through on that occasion, and that the important Amendment which we are now discussing should be postponed until to-day.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: Precisely so. I understand what the suggestion was. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] Permit me to explain what I said. I said that the postponement of this particular Amendment from Friday to Thursday was made at the suggestion of the noble Marquess. I did not say that there was not a proposal to postpone the consideration of the Amendments from Friday. A proposal was made for the postponement by the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell); but what he suggested was that the consideration of the decision of the Government, as embodied in these Amendments, should be postponed from last Friday to last Monday, and the suggestion to postpone this particular Amendment from Friday, not to Monday, but to Thursday, came from the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale, so that, in spite of the somewhat premature jeers of hon. Gentlemen opposite, my statement, it seems, is confirmed by the noble Marquess himself. The other day the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury, in language the portentousness of which excited various rumours in this House, in reply to a request of mine to give us an entire day for the discussion of this Bill, said that the Government were firmly convinced that this Bill was so necessary to peace and tranquillity in Ireland that they could not even allow 48 hours to elapse before it was passed, and thereupon following that statement not 48 hours were allowed to elapse, but four or five days were allowed to elapse before the measure was considered in the other House, where the right hon. Gentleman and his Friends have complete control of the Business. The responsibility for the postponement of this matter rests with the Government and their supporters, and they are also responsible for the vital changes which have been made in the measure. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in his characteristic style——[*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] Hon. Gentlemen opposite seem to object to my reference to the right hon. Gentleman's characteristic style; but they seem to like his characteristic style, and I do not see why they should object to the phrase. Well, the right hon. Gentleman, in his characteristic style, entirely denied the statement of the hon. and learned Member for North Longford. He says it is because we desire to discuss another and entirely new principle that we wish to have a postponement; but it is nothing of the kind. Our wish is to restore the Bill to the position in which it was when it left this House. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer speaks altogether as if the Bill, as it left this House, was exactly the same as it is now. Let me compare the two things. The Bill, as it left this House in line 34, page 15, was to this effect—The Land Commissioners are to do so-and-so, they are to consider what alterations, if any, should equitably be made in the judicial rents to be paid. As this clause was amended by the House of Lords, instead of that are inserted words to the effect that the rents fixed under the provisions of this section shall differ by the difference in prices given in the respective years. So that you see under the Bill as it left this House the Land Commissioners had a large equitable jurisdiction, and under the Bill as amended by Earl Cadogan's Amendment that discretion is limited, so that the reduction in rent will be measured by the reduction in prices only. Why, the two things are absolutely distinct. The right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury has been asked to apply the clôture. He is quite welcome to apply it if he likes. If the right hon. Gentleman wishes to take that serious responsibility upon himself he is welcome to do so; but we beg to point out—and in this we are supported by one of our most vehement opponents—namely, the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell), that the Amendment of Earl Cadogan is a message of woe, disaster, and civil war to the people of Ireland. Under circumstances like these, is it too much to ask that an Amendment which has such a wide range, and which will have such enormous results, should be fairly and fully discussed at a reasonable hour? This is a clause which vitally affects the lives and homes of many thousands of the Irish people, and if it is passed in its present form it will amount practically to a message of starvation and woe to those people. We are supposed to be asking too much when we ask that it should have more discussion than two or three hours after midnight. For these reasons I feel it necessary to move that this debate be now adjourned.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Mr. T. P. O'Connor.*)

Mr. W. H. SMITH: I claim to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question put accordingly, "That the Question be now put."

The House *divided*:—Ayes 224; Noes 155: Majority 69.—(Div. List, No. 401.) [2.5 A.M.]

Question put, "That the Debate be now adjourned."

The House *divided*:—Ayes 155; Noes 224: Majority 69.—(Div. List, No. 402.) [2.15 A.M.]

Mr. W. H. SMITH: I claim to move, "That the Original Question be now put."

Mr. CLANCY (rising and speaking at the same time with Mr. W. H. Smith): I rise to move that this House do now adjourn.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order! The Question is, that this House doth agree with the Lords in the said Amendment.

Original Question put accordingly.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 215; Noes 161: Majority 54.—(Div. List, No. 403.)

Next Amendment, in Clause E, line 19, to leave out "counties, unions, or," read.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): Before the next Amendment is put from the Chair—a point of Order, Sir—I wish to move a consequential Amendment to that now carried. The House has decided this point, and I wish now to ask whether the Government will not agree, now that they have carried this Amendment against us under circumstances I will not characterize, whether they will agree that the reduction shall take effect on any outstanding arrears existing—[*Interruptions*]—I will not detain the House more than a moment—I move this Amendment with no idea beyond that of improving the Bill. You have agreed to the proposition that the Land Commission shall have regard to prices in certain years; then I think it is not too much to ask that as they are dealing with rent on the question of prices, that the arrears shall be dealt with on the same basis. You propose to deal with the rent falling due in November as the Bill stands. I propose to add further words to those inserted providing that the rent fixed under this section shall differ in respect to prices as aforesaid in the respective years—then I propose to add, "provided such reduction shall take effect on any arrears outstanding in 1887, and"—

COLONEL SANDYS (Lancashire, S.W., Bootle): I rise to ask you, Sir, whether this is a point of Order?

MR. SPEAKER: I understood the hon. and learned Gentleman rose to a point of Order, but he is now moving an Amendment which I think is not in Order. It is entirely new matter. The "difference in prices, as aforesaid," has nothing whatever to do with arrears of rent, it is importing matter totally foreign to the Lords' Amendment.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I beg respectfully to submit to you, Sir, the Lords have introduced a new element—new matter—into the section. The clause, as it originally stood, enabled the Commissioners to have equitable regard to any considerations they pleased—[*Cries of* "No, no!"]—that is my view. They were to have equitable regard to any circumstances they pleased. They were to have regard to prices, but they might have regard to a thousand other things. You have introduced an Amendment that has regard to rent, and the tenants will have less reduction than they otherwise would have got, and I propose that as you have decided that the rent shall not be reduced by half what it would be if the Bill had been allowed to retain its old shape that this new matter, this slight reduction you now give shall have effect——

MR. SPEAKER: There is nothing in this clause of the Bill touching the arrears of rent.

MR. T. M. HEALY: With great respect, Sir, I would point out to you that I think there is.

MR. SPEAKER: I mean so far as rent is referred to in this section.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I do not for one moment desire, Sir, to question your ruling. I submit at once if you say it is not germane to the clause.

MR. SPEAKER: Will the hon. and learned Member point out in the clause any reference to arrears of the rent?

MR. T. M. HEALY: In which clause, Sir?

MR. SPEAKER: In the clause with which we are dealing. I do not find such, neither does the Lords' Amendment touch the arrears of rent; it is applicable only to the relation that rent shall bear to prices.

MR. T. M. HEALY: The clause, Sir, deals with the matter of old rent, and that old rent was calculated on a particular basis, and if the Lords had allowed the clause to remain as it originally stood the question of arrears would consequently have arisen. But I will not press the point if the Chair is not fully seized of it. We have had no opportunity of putting down our Amendments and were anxious to have more time for that purpose. I admit it is scarcely fair to spring an Amendment of this kind on the Chair before there has been an opportunity of considering it; but I submit that it is consequent upon the new matter introduced by the Lords' Amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: The Lords' Amendments are pertinent to the matter of the clause. In the clause there is no reference to arrears of rent; therefore, it is not in order to introduce the question of arrears in this clause or on the Lords' Amendment to it.

Amendment, in Clause E, line 19, to leave out "counties, unions, or," again read.

Motion made, and question proposed, "That this House doth disagree with the Lords in the said Amendment."—(*Mr. A. J. Balfour.*)

MR. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.): I beg to move that this House do now adjourn.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn."—(*Mr. Clancy.*)

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I trust the hon. Member will not persist in that Motion. Its only effect will be to delay the Bill and there is nothing to be gained. This is an Amendment to which we propose to disagree.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): I deplore as much as anyone what has taken place to-night; but I do not see that anything will be gained by any further delay. We have done our best, we have done all we could, and I warn the House of Commons now that they have passed a clause to-night which, instead of reducing rents, subjects tenants to very great risk of having their rents raised. All I have to say is that I protest against the whole proceedings of to-night, but I will take no part in factious opposition of this kind.

Mr. PARNELL (Cork): It is not worth while to persist in this Motion after the protests we have made unavailingly, I regret to say, and the Divisions we have taken. I cannot join with the hon. Member for South Tyrone in the belief he expressed that he has done all he could. I think he could have done more. I think he might have called his Party together to agree upon concerted action before allowing them to leave town. However, it is no use crying over spilt milk. I deeply regret the issue, and the result of this Bill will I fear be most unfortunate, most unhappy to the tenants of Ireland, and the pretended concessions to them will turn out but a sham.

Mr. SPEAKER: Does the hon. Member withdraw his Motion?

Mr. CLANCY: I withdraw, Sir, in deference to the wish of my hon. Friend the Member for Cork, certainly not to the appeal of the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury, who has refused all consideration to us, and meets all our just demands with his habitual answer.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Original Question put, and *agreed to.*

Next Amendment read.

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): The first part is consequential, the latter part would be important if it were necessary, but I am given to understand by those whose judgment may be relied on in such matters, that there is no doubt whatever that the words are unnecessary, and that all the objects the Lords may be supposed to have had in view are already carried out in the Bill as it stands. I therefore move that this House doth disagree with the said Amendment.

Motion made, and Question, "That this House doth disagree with the Lords in the said Amendment,"—(*Mr. A. J. Balfour,*)—put, and *agreed to.*

Remaining Amendments *disagreed to.*

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a Committee be *appointed,* 'to draw up Reasons to be assigned to The Lords for disagreeing to the Amendments made by the Lords to the Amendments made by the Commons to the Irish Land Law Bill, to which this House hath disagreed:'"

Motion *agreed to.*

Mr. Arthur Balfour, Mr. Attorney General for England, Mr. Attorney General for Ireland, Mr. Solicitor General for England, The Marquess of Hartington, Mr. Secretary Matthews, Mr. Jackson, and Mr. Akers-Douglas, *nominated.*

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): If it is competent for me to do so, I beg to move that the name of Colonel King-Harman be added.

Motion made, and Question, "That Colonel King-Harman be added to said Committee"—(*Mr. T. M. Healy,*)—put, and *agreed to.*

To withdraw immediately; Three to be the quorum.

COAL MINES, &c. REGULATION BILL.—[Bill 130.]

(*Mr. Secretary Matthews, Mr. Stuart-Wortley.*)

COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): I beg to move that this Bill be considered to-morrow, and in doing so I would ask the hon. Member for Morpeth (Mr. Burt) to use his influence with his Friends to remove the Notices of new clauses that stand on the Paper. Their continuance on the Paper delays the progress of the Bill through Committee, and an opportunity will be given, if it is desired, to discuss them on Report.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Committee be deferred till To-morrow."—(*Mr. W. H. Smith.*)

Mr. BURT (Morpeth): I may say that I understand from the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury that he does not object to make this Bill the first Order of the day on Report, and that being so, I am in a position to say that hon. Members having Amendments are prepared to agree to the proposal he makes. But may I suggest that it would be better to carry the Bill through Committee now? I am sure we could dispose of it in a few minutes, and the difficulty would be removed at once.

Mr. W. H. SMITH: I think, as it is now so late, the Bill had better stand over for to-morrow.

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): As I have an Amendment down, I should like to know when the Report stage will be taken, and if it is distinctly understood it will be the first Order?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: I cannot say now when the Bill will be put down; but it shall be the first Order of the day for Report.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Committee *deferred* till *To-morrow.*

POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANKS AND GOVERNMENT ANNUITIES BILL.

(*Mr. Raikes, Mr. Jackson.*)

[BILL 344.] CONSIDERATION.

Bill, as amended, *considered.*

New Clause—

In page 11, after Clause 4, insert the following Clause:—

(Exception of money invested in computing annual maximum.)

"Where in any Savings Bank year any sums not deposited for immediate investment are invested by any Savings Bank authority, on the request of the depositor, in any Government Stock, any sums previously deposited in that year by such depositor shall not, except so far as they exceed in the aggregate the sums so invested, be reckoned in computing the maximum amount which is allowed to be deposited in that year,"—(*Mr. Raikes,*)

—*brought up,* and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be read a second time."

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I beg to move that the debate be now adjourned. We have had no Notice of this new clause, and it is rather too much to ask us to enter upon the discussion now.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned." —(*Mr. Conybeare.*)

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University): I may say the clause has been on the Paper two days, and I think the hon. Member will find there is no objection to it, and a general opinion that the Bill should become law as soon as possible.

Mr. CONYBEARE: The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House has told us it is too late to proceed with other Business.

Mr. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): The clause has general assent. It carries out the proposal urged in the Memorial I sent this Session to the Postmaster General, signed by more than 100 Members, to encourage people to invest their savings in Consols. I hope the hon. Member will not persist in his Motion, or if he does, that the Government will persevere.

Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): After the remarks of the right hon. Gentleman that it is too late to go on with other Business, we certainly must insist on an adjournment.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Debate *adjourned* till *To-morrow.*

CRIMINAL LAW (SCOTLAND) PROCEDURE (No. 2) BILL.

CONSIDERATION OF LORDS' AMENDMENTS.

Lords' Amendments *considered.*

First Amendment *agreed to.*

Amendment proposed,

In page 2, line 4, to leave out from "to," to "district," in line 6, and insert "the limits within which the Sheriff has jurisdiction in criminal matters, whether by Statute or common law,"

the next Amendment, read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said Amendment."

Debate arising.

Debate *adjourned* till *To-morrow.*

MOTIONS.

———o———

MERCHANT SEAMEN'S WIDOWS AND ORPHANS PENSION BILL.

On Motion of Colonel Hill, Bill for the providing of Pensions for the Widows and Orphans of Merchant Seamen, *ordered* to be brought in by Colonel Hill, Sir James Corry, Mr. Sinclair, and Mr. Stephen Williamson.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 382.]

ADJOURNMENT.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn."—(*Mr. Jackson.*)

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): May I ask, Mr. Speaker, as a matter of procedure, whether it is usual, in an important Bill like the Land Bill, that the reasons for disagreeing with the Lords should be presented to the House before the House rises? Can that be done, or do the Government intend to draw up reasons, and send them to the Lords without informing the House?

MR. SPEAKER: They will be reported when the House next meets.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Then is it intended to waste another day over this important Bill which it is so essential to pass?

After a pause,

MR. CONYBEARE: May I ask, Mr. Speaker, is there any Question before the House?

MR. SPEAKER: It is not unusual to wait a few minutes for the Report of a Committee; it has often been done before.

Quesion put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 64; Noes 48: Majority 16.—(Div. List, No. 404.)

House adjourned accordingly at ten minutes after Three o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, 19*th August*, 1887.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILLS—*Second Reading*—Womens Suffrage (No. 2) (236), *discharged;* Trustee Savings Banks * (221); Friendly Societies Act (1875) Amendment (No. 3) * (237).
Second Reading — Committee negatived — Public Works Loans * (234).
Committee—Report—Lieutenancy Clerks Allowances * (231).

CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDURE (IRELAND) ACT, 1887, SECTION 6—PROCLAMATION OF THE NATIONAL LEAGUE.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of SALISBURY): My Lords, it may be for the convenience of your Lordships that I should announce that the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, with the advice of the Privy Council, has to-day, by Proclamation, declared the National League to be a dangerous association under Section 6 of the Crimes Act, and has thus taken power under that Statute to prohibit and suppress that association by order in any district where such a step may be required for forbidding intimidation or interference with the administration of the law. The Proclamation, which I will lay on the Table, is in the following terms:—

"By the Lord Lieutenant and Privy Council in Ireland.

"A Special Proclamation.

"LONDONDERRY.

"WHEREAS we are satisfied that there exists in Ireland an association known by the name of the Irish National League, and that said association in parts of Ireland promotes and incites to acts of violence and intimidation and interferes with the administration of the law.

"Now, We, the Lord Lieutenant-General and General Governor of Ireland, by and with the advice of the Privy Council in Ireland, by virtue of section 6. of 'The Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act, 1887,' and of every power and authority in this behalf, do by this Our special Proclamation, declare from the date hereof the said association known as the Irish National League to be dangerous.

"This Proclamation shall be promulgated by the same being published in the Dublin Gazette, and by a printed copy thereof being posted at every police station or barrack and every place in which divisional police courts or petty sessions are held respectively in Ireland.

"Given at the Council Chamber, Dublin Castle, this 19th day of August 1887.

"ASHBOURNE, C.
"HEDGES EYRE CHATTERTON.

"GOD SAVE THE QUEEN."

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

HORSE BREEDING AND SUPPLY FOR INDUSTRIAL PURPOSES.

QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

LORD RIBBLESDALE, in rising to call attention to an undertaking entered into by Her Majesty's Government with a view to encourage horse breeding in Ireland; and to ask, Whether any similar action was contemplated by them to apply to England and Scotland? said, that all the evidence which could possibly be got had been obtained on the subject; 400 or 500 printed circulars had been sent out to horsebreeders in England, Scotland, and Wales, with the result that about 300 had been answered. The evidence collected had been carefully sifted, Mr. Goschen had accepted the general principle of the suggestions made, and an undertaking had been given that the House of Commons should be asked for a sum of money amounting to £5,000 to be devoted to the purpose in Ireland, of which £3,200 was for stallions, and the balance for bulls. What they now wanted was that an annual grant should be given to England, Scotland, and Wales, which would give a certain amount of money to be invested in a responsible body which would administer it for the encouragement of horse breeding. He was pleased that the Government had taken this action with regard to Ireland; but, while they fully recognized the excellence of Ireland and the genius of her people for horse breeding, he felt strongly that something ought to be done for England, Scotland, and Wales, where agriculture was quite as much depressed as in Ireland, though the people did not take the same means of bringing their condition before the public. He hoped very much that something in the direction of putting real, good, sound blood within easy reach of the tenant farmer in England, Scotland, and Wales, was contemplated out of the public funds.

The PRIME MINISTER and SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of Salisbury): In answer to the noble Lord, I have to say that the matter has been under the consideration of the Government, who desire to help it on as much as possible, and who recognize its importance fully. The mode in which the funds which the noble Lord asks for will be furnished is this—In the first place, Queen's Plates, by consent of Her Majesty, will henceforth be devoted to the object of improving the breed of horses, and this will represent a contribution of £3,000 a-year. The Chancellor of the Exchequer also proposes to put in the Estimates a further sum making up an amount of £5,000 for the same purpose. The Government propose further, following the precedent set in Ireland, to assign the administration of the fund to an independent trust, of which my noble Friend the Master of the Horse (the Duke of Portland) will be a member. I hope that this mode of solving the difficulty which the Government have decided on will meet with the approval of the noble Lord.

Lord RIBBLESDALE said, that what had been stated by the noble Marquess fully met all his views.

ARMY (ADMINISTRATION).

RESOLUTION.

The Earl of DUNRAVEN, in rising to call attention to the system of administration of the Army, and to move "That reforms are urgently required therein," said: In bringing forward the question of Army Administration, I am, I confess, under this disadvantage—that the whole of the evidence taken by the Select Committee of the other House on the Army and Navy Estimates is not yet published. I labour also under the disadvantage that it is so dark that I cannot read the extracts I have made. If there had been any reasonable expectation that an opportunity of examining the whole evidence given before the Select Committee would have arisen later in the Session, but not too late to be of use, I would have postponed this Motion. That, however, appears to be out of the question. At the same time, I have plenty of material to go upon, for the Report of the Royal Commission, presided over by Sir James Stephen, has been published for some months, and the evidence given before the Committee on the Army Estimates, and already published, is very voluminous. Both these publications are pregnant with meaning and teem with facts, and they deal with such great issues that it would be most unfortunate if the Session were to close without some distinct assurance from the Government that they mean seriously to take in hand the question of Army Reform. It is apparent that a state of affairs exists in the War Department, as regards the framing of Estimates and the keeping of accounts, the administration and *personnel* of the Department and the Service generally, especially the non-effective branches of the Service and the manufacturing department, which would not be tolerated for a single moment in any private business, however great and complicated; and I feel sure that, with the Reports of the Royal Commission and the Select Committee before them, the public will feel gravely alarmed unless convinced that the Government are animated by a strong and sincere determination to address themselves vigorously to the task of searching out the defects in our system, and applying the necessary remedies to them. In calling attention to these Reports I feel that I have undertaken a heavy task. It is impossible adequately to deal with the subject within the compass of a speech in this House. If I attempted to do so I should exhaust your Lordships and myself long before I had exhausted the subject, and therefore I do not propose to go into the matter at great length. What I want to do is to take a general view of the main points, as indicated in these Reports, in order to try and bear out my proposition that reform is urgently needed. The whole subject as unfolded before the Royal Commission and the Select Committee appeared to divide itself naturally under certain large headings, such as the system on which Estimates were prepared and presented to Parliament; the form and method under which the accounts and disbursements of that great spending Department the War Office were kept; the administration of the Department and of the Army, and the possible economies that might be made therein; and, finally, the Non-Effective Vote. Of course, questions of expense involving taxation belong principally to the other House of Parliament, and I will not trench on the province of that Assembly; but in a question of this kind every taxpayer is interested as far as economy is concerned, and not only every taxpayer but every person living in the country is vitally interested in the question of efficiency. It will, therefore, be admitted that the matter is one which lies well within the cognizance of this House. The whole position, I admit, must be looked at with a full appreciation of the fact that our Army is a Volunteer Force, and that the abolition of Purchase caused a great expense. Making, however, full allowance for those facts, I believe that there is ample proof of considerable extravagance in many Departments, and of great extravagance in other Departments, combined with inefficiency resulting from the peculiar position of the Secretary of State, from the method of administration of the War Department, and from the peculiar system of accounts which involve an absence of all proper control, and, perhaps, from a too centralized system generally. With regard to the Estimates, the first thing about them which strikes one as remarkable is that the Secretary of State explained them in his Memorandum in such a way as to make it impossible for any ordinary human being to reconcile the Memorandum with the Estimates. The Accountant General, Mr. Knox, admitted that no private person could, without enormous labour, have divided the Army Estimates in the way and under the headings adopted in the Memorandum of the Secretary of State. The fact is that, to enable anybody but a trained expert to get any inkling of the meaning of the Estimates, the Secretary of State must explain then to Parliament in a form totally different from that in which they are printed. In other words, the Estimates, while intelligible or presumed to be intelligible to the War Department, are totally unintelligible to the public. The Accountant General says that the form in which they are prepared and presented is necessary to the Department for administrative purposes—that it is necessary in order that the Department may understand and check the expenditure. That seems to me a very peculiar state of things, and one very difficult to comprehend, because what it means is that, in order that the Estimates may be intelligible and useful in the Department, it is necessary that they should be unintelligible and useless to anybody outside. What would be thought of a Railway Company that prepared its accounts and balance sheet in a form unintelligible to the shareholders, and requiring to be explained by means of some different form not recognizable as another version of the form prepared for the Directors' own use? And what would be thought if the Directors justified this state of affairs on the ground that it was necessary to prepare their accounts in this unintelligible form in order to make them useful to themselves? I suspect that, under such circumstances, they would hear some plain English on the subject. Now, my Lords, the Accountant General stated, also, that he did not know what form the House of Commons would desire the Estimates to take. I do not know either, and if I did it certainly would be out of place for me to give any opinion on the point; but one thing I am well aware of—that the taxpayers of the country would wish the Estimates presented in such a form as to be clear and intelligible not only to the officials and experts at the War Office, but to themselves, and certainly to the Representatives whom they send to the other House. Does the method in which the Estimates are prepared tend to economy? Judging by what I have read in these Reports, it seems to me that it certainly does not. It is admitted that the Secretary of State is the only person who can possibly economize; but it appears obvious from this evidence that he is so situated as, practically speaking, to be able to exercise very little control over the framing of the Estimates. They are framed upon no given basis. There are no fixed *data* on which they can be formed; nothing with which they can be compared; and this General Brackenbury clearly pointed out. They appear, first of all, to be blocked out roughly according to the Estimates of the preceding year, a proceeding which in itself sufficiently accounts for the fact that the normal Estimates of one year become invariably the normal Estimates of another year, and that the whole tendency for a long time has been towards constant and large increases. Then, my Lords, the heads of some sub-departments make out the Estimates by what they consider they require; after which there occurs a sort of fight with the Secretary of State, which Mr. Knox fairly describes as being very heavy work indeed. Considering that the heads of these departments or sub-departments have great technical knowledge, while the Secretary of State has very little if any at all, it is very obvious that in a conflict in which the Secretary of State endeavours to defend himself and the country from the assaults of these gentlemen, he is sure to get the worst of it. As far as I can understand—and I have looked into this matter as carefully as I can—it is impossible for the Secretary of State really to have any very definite, clear, and distinct understanding of what the general requirements of the whole Service are, or what the requirements of the different sub-departments are. That fact appears to have caused in General Brackenbury's mind his idea of what he calls having a brain over the Army, a central control, a council of some kind, presided over by a military officer of great distinction, whose duty it should be to advise the Secretary of State as to requirements of the various sub-departments of the Army, who should receive and be responsible for allotting all the money among the various branches of the Service. I do not venture any opinion whatever upon that point, or on any other of the recommendations that are made. I only wish to say that, as far as I can judge, the only mode of securing economy at present within the power of the Secretary of State is that of insisting upon curtailment of the expenditure by a round, lump sum. He cannot go into the items, but he can say that the Estimates shall not exceed a certain amount. In that way economy can be secured, and in no other way whatever. At the commencement of this Session I ventured to say in this House—

> "That, in order to effect retrenchment, the positive cutting down of expenses, to a certain extent, must be preliminary to any such thorough overhauling of the great Public Departments as would result in real saving of expenses, and a practical and sensible remission of the taxation of the country."

The Prime Minister objected entirely to that view, and said he did not think economy could be made by cutting down the Estimates first, and examining into their items afterwards; and he added—

> "The only method and hope for economy is by careful examination of the items of expenditure, and the objects for which they are voted."

Well, if anyone will read carefully the evidence given before the Committee of the other House, and the evidence given before Sir James Stephen's Commission, they will come to the conclusion that the Secretary of State might carefully examine the items until Doomsday without the remotest chance of effecting curtailment of the expenditure. So high an authority as General Brackenbury backs me up in the opinion I expressed some time ago, his idea being that the Secretary of State should say decisively how much money Parliament will grant for the whole Military Service of the country, and that then some high military authority will look into all the items, examine carefully the requirements of the Department and its various sub-departments, and allot among them the sum so granted. His view is, therefore, that the examination of items and the allotment of money should be undertaken by officials, and that, as far as economy is concerned, the Secretary of State should do nothing, practically speaking, but decide, after consultation, on the gross amount to be given to the Service. Judging from the evidence before the

Royal Commission and the Select Committee, he can exercise very little control, practically, over the expenditure of the War Office; and if he has no control, it is perfectly obvious that Parliament has very little or none at all. I spoke just now of the incomprehensible way in which the Estimates are presented. I do not want to trouble the House with many instances, but I will mention one or two. It is quite impossible for any human being, not an expert, to tell how the money is expended, and in what sub-departments of the War Department. Between 1870 and 1887 our Estimates have increased by the enormous sum of £9,000,000. It has been a gradual and continuous increase, and yet the Accountant General admits that it would have been extremely difficult for any ordinary person to have discovered that so great an annual increase was continuously going on. That appears to me a most astounding and alarming admission—that the accounts of the Army are presented in such a form that no ordinary man, nobody who was not an expert, could possibly find out that an enormous yearly growth in the expenditure was going on.

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for WAR (Lord Harris) was understood to ask where this statement of the Accountant General was to be found?

The Earl of DUNRAVEN (after searching among his papers): I am afraid I cannot find the passage just now. What I meant to say was that the Estimates had increased to the extent of £9,000,000 in 17 years, and Mr. Knox admitted that no ordinary person, looking at the Estimates year by year, could ascertain that such an increase was going on. I will not, however, go further into that matter, as I cannot find the passage in the evidence. But, whether Mr. Knox made the statement or not, it is certainly very difficult for an ordinary person to find out in what particular branch of the Service money has been expended, what it has been spent upon, and whether the nation has received full value for it. It is also admitted by Mr. Knox that it is very difficult to ascertain the proportionate increase of men to pay and of pay to men. That can only be arrived at by rule of thumb. It is evident, further, that the number of men, as borne on the Vote which satisfies their pay, cannot be ascertained by an ordinary person—cannot be arrived at by anybody without immense trouble. Various items are spread over an immense number of Votes. Take one, for instance. The purchase of horses was included in the Vote for Regimental Pay. Pay-sergeants' pay was not included at all in the £45,000 for regimental accounts. The Vote for Pay does not by any means show the total coming under that head, because pay in money alone is mentioned, pay in kind not being included at all. In the case of the Vote for Divine Service precisely the same difficulty occurs. It is impossible to find out by the Vote what the whole expenditure upon Divine Service is, because large items, such as the salary of chaplains, is not included, and the £800 per year paid to the Chaplain General does not appear at all. In fact, it is necessary to look over three or four other Votes to find out approximately what the whole cost of Divine Service in the Army is. The Medical Department is precisely in the same case. There you have the astounding fact that whereas the Vote accounted for only £324,000, the total expenditure was really £704,000. I need not multiply examples. I do not think anybody will deny that, as a general rule, no Vote shows on its face what the total sum expended really is. You cannot ascertain by looking at a single Vote the total sum expended on the branch of the Service which the Vote is supposed to satisfy. This appears to me to be a very extraordinary system of book-keeping. It is impossible to find out under any one heading what the total expense to which that heading relates really is. It is, moreover, impossible to trace the money. Items are spread over different Votes, and you have to look through many of them to find out what the different items really are. It appears to me that such matters ought to be made as clear as possible to the general public—certainly to Parliament—whereas under the present system they can be understood only by men who have had long experience, and who may be called experts in the examination of accounts. As to the general supervision of War Department finance, the Accountant General is nominally responsible under the Secretary of State for the whole; but an enormous sum, amounting to £8,000,000 annually, is under the Surveyor General of the Ordnance. Now, the Accountant General is a permanent official, a man of great experience, who thoroughly understands the accounts with which he has to deal; but the Surveyor General of the Ordnance cannot possibly be expected to understand the finances of the Department, seeing that his is a political appointment, into which he goes probably without any knowledge of Army accounts, and which, except in rare cases, he does not retain long enough to acquire complete knowledge of so complicated and technical a subject. The fact of the matter is that the subordinates of the Surveyor General, the heads of sub-departments, such as the Clothing Factory at Pimlico, Woolwich Arsenal, the Powder Factory at Waltham, the Commissariat, the Transport, and so on, frame their own estimates, and render their own accounts, subject to no control whatever. That is a principle which seems to pervade the whole of the Estimates. What it comes to is this—that the chiefs of the great sub-departments and the commanders of districts, fortifications, &c., make a rough guess as to what they will require, and, on the understanding that they will not get near as much as they demand, ask for a great deal more than they need. That point was brought out very strongly by Colonel Duncan, Commander of the 1st Division of Artillery at Woolwich, who said—

> "It is the allotment of money I object to. I think if a General knew that he would be rewarded if he were a good economist in his district, there would be an enormous amount of economy brought about. At present, the General knows he will not get what he asks for, so he asks for double what he wants."

That, my Lords, does not appear to be a system likely to work economically. General Brackenbury, speaking of the Heads of great Departments, such as the Commander-in-Chief, the Inspector General of Fortifications, and the Director of Artillery and Stores, speaks strongly in the same way—

> "None of them, so far as I can judge, is responsible for economy. The only check I know upon any of us soldiers is simply the knowledge that we are not likely to get all we want; but there is no military head at the War Office who is responsible for taking those various demands for works and fortresses, for stores and guns, for men, transport, vehicles, and so on—there is, I say, no great military head at the War Office who is responsible for taking those various demands, comparing them, collating them, and seeing which can be dispensed with, and which absolutely cannot be dispensed with, with safety to the defensive scheme of the nation."

That, as I said before, reveals a state of affairs not very likely to result in economy. As a matter of fact, the way in which the Estimates appear to be arrived at is a very rough one—namely, a number of gentlemen, no doubt very amiable and very estimable, but of whom the public know nothing, prepare what Estimates they think necessary for the requirements of their own particular sub-departments, and prepare them in a way of which the country and Parliament have no cognizance whatever. They are then submitted to the Accountant General and to the Surveyor General of Ordnance, who, in their turn, submits them to the Secretary of State, who presents them to Parliament with a Memorandum detailed in such a form that no human being who has not been in the War Office for many years can make head or tail of the matter. Under such a system, it is unreasonable to suppose that the Secretary of State can possibly form any distinct, clear, and sound judgment as to what the real requirements of the War Department are. It will be in the recollection of your Lordships that when the late Chancellor of the Exchequer resigned his Office, the question of making a reduction in the Army Estimates came prominently before Parliament and the country; and the Prime Minister, speaking on the question, said—

> "We are not prepared to cut off a considerable lump sum from the Estimates which my right hon. Friends at the head of the Admiralty and the War Office declared to be necessary for the defence of the country."

Well, my Lords, that would be a strong, and I think I might say unanswerable, argument, if it were possible to suppose that the Secretary of State could really thoroughly understand what the requirements of the Army are. But in both these Reports—that of the Royal Commission, and that of the Select Committee of the House of Commons, so far as it has already taken evidence—it is distinctly shown that there is no military sub-department, or council, or adviser who can tell the Secretary of State what is absolutely necessary and what is not, and that, practically speaking, he has no control whatever over the Estimates sent up by the various sub-departments. Under those circumstances, the argument that it is impossible to reduce Estimates because the Secretary of State has spoken of them as necessary is very much invalidated. I have nothing more to add about the Estimates; but I should like to say a few words on the question how expenditure can be checked and verified. In the first place, the Appropriation Accounts are not presented to Parliament until nearly two years after the time when the money is voted—a fact which in itself makes it almost impossible for Parliament to exercise any effective check over the expenditure. In the case of a great Railway Company the balance-sheet is furnished every half-year, and within a few weeks of the time at which the books are closed. Mr. Hurst, the Auditor Accountant of the Army Manufacturing Sub-Department, admits in his evidence that the accounts of the War Department are not so complicated as those of a great Railway Company, and that, practically speaking, there is no reason why the Appropriation Account should be so long delayed. Now, how are the accounts audited? Mr. Hurst, speaking about his own sub-department —the Army Manufacturing Department —admits that the Appropriation Account is prepared without any communication with the Auditors. There is a Return presented to Parliament detailing very minutely all the expenses of that sub-department; but that Return is prepared without any reference to the expense accounts as audited. It is admitted in evidence to be worthless in so far as it enables any ordinary person to verify the accounts by the Auditor, because it is impossible for anyone to make the two accounts agree—to make the audited account agree with the production account. Now, the Surveyor General's Department spends annually the enormous sum of £8,000,000, and, practically, the heads of the sub-departments appear to be their own auditors. As far as I can judge, they ask for as much money as they like, get as much as they can, prepare their accounts in their own way, and audit them themselves. In the Manufacturing Sub-Department which spends £1,600,000 a-year, Mr. Hurst is both accountant and auditor. Therefore, the accounts are kept and audited by one and the same person; and it appears that the accountant has not the least idea whether the money he accounts for is spent in the way he intended. It is quite impossible for the Surveyor General to see that his accounts are properly audited; and it is admitted by Mr. Hurst that the Director of Artillery Stores, General Alderson, not only had the spending of a large proportion of the money voted to the Surveyor General, but also audited the accounts, which were supposed to show how it had been disbursed. The method of audit is, also, subject to peculiar variations, the Royal Carriage Department, for instance, specifying all details in its audit, whereas in the case of the Royal Laboratory the accounts are audited *en bloc.* In some cases the audit appears to be made, not on the real accounts, but on a valuation, which may be very erroneous. For instance, it appears that stores estimated at £145,000, and which stand in the cost ledger and in the audit at that figure, realized in reality only £98,000. It appears to me, therefore, that the audit of the War Office expenditure, based, as it is in some cases, on totally erroneous figures, and, in some cases, conducted by officials employed in the very Departments in which the money is spent, must be looked upon by the public as little better than a sham. This extraordinary arrangement has not even the merit of being cheap. A double audit, under which every pay list sent up to the War Office is audited all over again, is supposed to be necessary, owing, I imagine, to the centralization of our system; but it causes an immense amount of expense without adding one atom to accuracy or efficiency. On that point Colonel Duncan says that a saving of £50,000 a-year might be made if the double audit were done away with; and, according to General Brackenbury, if it were abolished the clerical staff at the War Office, which is very large, might be diminished by one-half. One would suppose that stock-taking, which is an essential part of the business, would be conducted at the War Office in a business-like way. On the contrary, it appears to be very spasmodic, and not done in some cases for four, five, or six years. It is based, not on actual examination of the articles in stock, but on an inspection of the books; so that it is impossible to ascertain with certainty that things for which money has been voted by Parliament, and which have been paid for and appear all through the accounts, really exist at all. Then, my Lords, the general conclusion which I am forced to come, after reading this evidence, is that, as far as the accounts are concerned, nobody but an expert can possibly understand them. They appear to be kept in the War Office in such a way as to combine the maximum of expense with the minimum of clearness and lucidity; and, as far as the outside public are concerned, I doubt whether the audit which takes place is, frankly speaking, anything better than a sham. It is, from the way the accounts are kept, impossible for anybody to find out what proportion the requirements of the War Office bears to the whole amount voted to the Army. It is impossible to say what is spent on the whole Army, and what is spent on any particular Department of it; it is impossible to tell what number of men we have; it is impossible to ascertain what amount of guns we have, and what they cost us; it is impossible to find out what number of small arms we have, what quantity of munitions of war we have, and what amount of material we have. I do not mean to say that is impossible for an expert in the War Office; but I should say, taking the accounts as they are presented to Parliament and known to the country, it is impossible for any ordinary man to discover what the country pays in the different parts of the Army, and what the people of this country have in the shape of material and men for what they pay. If our system was designed, as the German system is believed by General Brackenbury to be designed, to produce such an amount of darkness and ignorance as to make it impossible for the outside world to interfere in Army matters, I should say our system was admirably devised to prevent Parliament and the public putting any check on the expenditure. That is the sense in which it seems to me to be devised, and my contention thereon is amply borne out. Now, my Lords, I would like to say a few words as to the Army administration generally, and the alleged extravagance that takes place therein. First of all, I would touch upon the Non-Effective Vote. The Non-Effective Vote appears to be out of all proportion to the strength of the effective branches of the Service—a Vote which is increasing so rapidly that, as described by Colonel Duncan, it "increases so rapidly that it will one day crush us." The Non-Effective Vote is very largely swollen in consequence of the change that is made in the abolition of Purchase, and on account of our short-service system. Short service is the alternative to a huge conscripted Standing Army. It is essential to our condition and requirement. But, at the same time, the great expenditure, under the head of half-pay and pensions, is abnormally large and should be checked. The total annual cost of the retired pay and half-pay is nearly £1,300,000. Of this, no less than the enormous sum of £62,000 a-year is paid to 109 Generals, who are not employed now, and are never likely to be. As regards education, there appears to be some difference of opinion in evidence before the Committee. With respect to Divine Service, the opinion is not so divided. There is a strong opinion expressed by Mr. Knox and Colonel Duncan that in case a reduction can be made by making use of the local clergy wherever practicable. On the Medical Service the expenditure is enormous, whether taken by itself or compared per man with the expenditure under the same head with the other Armies; but it is necessary to procure a good article. Now, it seems to me that the Medical Profession undertakes to Boycott the Army. It may, perhaps, be worth while to see whether the Army cannot retaliate a little on the Medical Profession. It must be noted, moreover, that according to Sir Thomas Crawford, Director General of the Medical Department, a sentimental grievance exists which is to be overcome by a money equivalent. If that is so, sentiment should be satisfied, and the pockets of the British taxpayer eased. There is one great fact which is applicable to all these non-effective branches of the Service, including the administration of military law, and which, indeed, applies to the Effective Service, and that is the disproportion in the pay of the higher grades of officers as compared to what is given to the lower grades of officers, non-commissioned officers, and to the rank and file of the Army. In the latter cases the pay is certainly not excessive, and compares unfavourably with what is given in the same grades of Foreign Armies. This fact stands out very strongly marked, and deserves the grave attention of the Government. There are many cases in which, according to the evidence contained in the Reports, great and unnecessary extravagance prevails in many quarters. The system of payment appears to be a crying evil. The way in which the men are paid involves an immense amount of clerical labour, and, consequently, of expense. The payment of officers, under which the Army agents receive a commission of 1½ per cent, amounting altogether to £23,000 annually, for doing what an ordinary banker would do in the ordinary way of business for nothing, is scandalous. A large saving may be made in the administration of the War Office, according to high authorities, by the substitution of military for civilian clerks. The Staff of the Yeomanry costs a sum out of all proportion to the available strength of that branch of the Service; and it is alleged by General Fraser that a great saving can be effected, and in the Staff of the Militia and Volunteers also, by utilizing the services of some of the large number of officers who are at present drawing large pay for doing nothing. It will be very instructive to know, in connection with this point, what is the real condition and value of the Yeomanry, Militia, Volunteers, and Reserves, as regards mobilization. Can they at short notice be properly equipped with transport, and everything necessary to enable them to take the field? If so, it is possible to judge of what the nation got for its money. If not, it is impossible to judge. Troops are of little or no value, whatever they cost, unless they can take the field. Competent witnesses also have spoken strongly of the amount of needless correspondence about trifles, and the redundancy of Returns which our highly centralized system entails. As to the much more serious matter—the constitution of the War Office itself—Colonel Duncan expresses a very strong opinion, with what justification I cannot say; but I must admit I was not surprised at his opinion, judging by the evidence. He described it as—

> "Quite the most irritating form of administration that exists; it is not efficient, and the expense is outrageous, practically £250,000, which is a great deal too much."

On the same point General Brackenbury says—

> "The present system leads to extravagance and want of efficiency. . . . There are a number of separate departments in the War Office working on parallel lines which never meet."

He complains that there is no great military head at the War Office charged with the duty of taking demands, comparing them, collating them, and seeing whether they can be dispensed with with safety to the defensive scheme of the nation; and he adds—

> "There is no fixed military policy; there is no fixed standard to which these things can be referred. I consider the system of having these different departments, each responsible for the efficiency of one particular branch of the Service and never brought together, is conducive to extravagance, because it is impossible for the Secretary of State or the permanent Under Secretary to check these demands, and to say which are really necessary from a military point of view, and which are not; and it leads, I think, to a want of efficiency, because there is no plan—no systematic military policy—to which all these things can he referred, which would be based on the principle of our coat being cut according to our cloth."

These are very strong words, especially as coming from an officer of General Brackenbury's great experience, and occupying a high and responsible position. These are words which I hope will be taken to heart by the country, by Parliament, and by the Government. And what does the nation get for this great outlay of money? If the expenditures are too great, and the Military Services of the country perfect, but too large, the case will be bad. If our Army and defences are inadequate for our needs, and the Army Estimates very low, the case will also be bad. But the case, as it really exists, is infinitely worse, for our expenditure is extravagantly great, and the efficiency of our Army in many important branches most lamentably small. These imperfections are brought out very clearly in the Report of Sir James Stephen's Commission, for the appointment of which, according to the Report of the Commissioners, the country has largely to thank Colonel Hope. There is some danger that the cloud of condemnation which has fallen on Colonel Hope, on account of his charges of corruption, might obscure the general charges of inefficiency, which are admitted by the Commissioners to be true. It may be supposed by the public that, the charges of corruption having fallen to the ground, the charges of inefficiency fell with them. Such is not the case. In the interest of the Public Service it is a great mistake to assert that Colonel Hope has no foundation to stand upon. The Commission state that—

> "Some matters of suspicion as to some of the inferior officers of the Ordnance Stores had been proved."

The Commission admit that some cases cannot be thoroughly inquired into on account of not possessing judicial powers, and others because it is not armed with inquisitorial powers. The Commission is, no doubt, perfectly right as regards the charges of fraud, and I do not for one moment condone Colonel Hope's action in the matter; but I think that in justice, and in view of the great services rendered by him, it should be borne in mind that he is right in many of his facts, though wrong in his deductions from them, and that some of the circumstances are of a most unfortunately suspicious character. By suspicious circumstances, I mean the holding of shares in a great firm carrying out Government contracts, by officers employed in the manufacturing departments of the Government. That has been put a stop to by an Order emanating from the Secretary of State a few months ago, and a very good job, too; for the transaction, though perfectly innocent, was calculated to give rise to suspicion. We have the fact that officers employed in Her Majesty's Service were leading members of a private firm which was employed in taking other contracts and providing other Governments with munitions of war. That was stated by the War Secretary to the House of Commons some months ago. I have not got a copy of that part of the Report.

Lord Harris addressed a Question to the noble Earl.

The Earl of DUNRAVEN: I have not got the papers with me; but if the noble Lord says that is not the case——

Lord HARRIS: I do not say it is not the case.

The Earl of DUNRAVEN: If a statement that Captain Noble and Major Jones were members of a private Company has not been issued from the War Office, I would withdraw the whole statement. But if I am correct in saying that, I will continue to say that such an order has been issued; because, although I am perfectly convinced these transactions were absolutely innocent, I do not think any reasonable man can deny that it was possible they would give rise to suspicion in the country, and it is desirable that anything which would give rise to suspicion should be avoided. The other matters I wish to allude to are transactions in connection with guns. As your Lordships know, a small Committee, on which Sir William Armstrong sat, and of which Captain Noble was Secretary, authorized the Armstrong guns. Your Lordships also know that Sir William Armstrong took service under the Crown as Engineer of Rifled Ordnance; but he afterwards left that, and went back to his manufacturing department at Elswick. There he was also joined by Major Jones, who had been employed by the Government, and Captain Noble, who had been employed in a manufacturing department of the Government. There is no reason why officers who have been in Her Majesty's Service should not join private firms; and there can be no reason, except expediency, why an eminent firm making guns should not be employed under the Crown; but, at the same time, it appears to me that the transaction is colourable, and that it may give rise in the public mind to some improper ideas; and I hope in future things of that kind may be avoided. As to the result of our expenditure, it was shown before Sir James Stephen's Committee that the Armstrong guns turned out utterly useless, and that these cost the country a waste of £3,000,000. Then as to the Collingwood guns; 15 of these were made, and one, I believe, failed when it was tried, one blew its muzzle off on board the *Collingwood*, 13 were withdrawn to be chase-hooped, and it was doubtful whether they would ever be of much use in the service of the country. As to the cutlasses, we know that those made in 1882 turned out unfit for use. They were passed by an officer who knew nothing about the subject, and it is only now said they were discreditable. To quote the words of the Report, "this is highly discreditable, and a grave reflection on the system." We know of defective bayonets, cutlasses, and saddlery having been supplied to our troops. We learn also from the Report that some 70,000 Enfield Martini rifles have been manufactured. The Committee has been sitting on that rifle for six years, and yet, after all, it is not to be adopted, for the rifle has turned out useless. As regards cartridges, fuses, and shrapnel shells, the same gross carelessness and culpable ignorance or neglect are to be traced. Major Hunter, writing from Korti, March 19, 1885, said—

> "Of the 110 shrapnel shells, 55 were found defective, some had no bursting charges, and others had the bursting charges wet."

On this General Redvers Buller wrote, March 30, 1885—

> "These Reports (Major Hunter's) disclose an alarming state of affairs. . . . I am told that this sort of thing is set out at Woolwich in piece work, there is only a nominal supervision, and the supposed inspection is a sham. . . . in fact, the work is scamped."

Lord Wolseley wrote on this to the Secretary of State for War—

> "I have already addressed your Lordship on the subject of the carelessness shown by those responsible at home for the quality of the ammunition supplied to the troops in the field, in issuing star shells of a different calibre from that of the guns of the battery serving here. I trust the new proof contained in the enclosed papers of the culpable negligence of some branch of the department at home will lead to an inquiry into its working by a Board of selected officers of the Line, unconnected in every way with the Woolwich manufacturing or store departments, or with the administration under which they work. I write strongly because I feel strongly when I think of how the lives of gallant soldiers may have been sacrificed in the present campaign, and may be again so sacrificed in the future, through the inexcusable carelessness of individuals in the Woolwich Arsenal, and through the unsoundness of a system under which such ammunition as that described in these enclosures could possibly have been issued for service in the field."

It is no wonder Lord Wolseley wrote strongly on the subject. Nothing can be more necessary than that men should be properly armed. It is essential to the safety of our men, the success of an expedition, the security of our shores and of the Empire, that our soldiers and seamen should be properly armed. The men, fortunately for them, not being subject to the contracts of departments, remain of as good material as they ever were; but the weapons with which they are armed, unfortunately, in too many cases fail. But we are told this is the fault of a system; but the system is composed of individuals, and the responsibility ought to rest upon the shoulders of those individuals. So long as the defects which occur in matters of this kind can be put down to the fault merely of our present system, so long there will be no adequate reform made. It is absolutely necessary the system should be reformed by the condition of making the men who are supposed to be responsible really responsible, and by judging of their capacity by results. The case was summed up in the Report of the Commission thus—

> "We think the charges of inefficiency, both generally and in a variety of particular instances have been proved to a considerable extent."

Anyone who reads the Blue Book will admit that the Commissioners used language inappropriately mild, and will come to the conclusion that carelessness and inefficiency are proved up to the hilt and to an alarming extent. As regards the system of the War Office, the Report condemned it—

> "The Secretary of State and the Surveyor General of Ordnance are practically in the hands of their subordinates, and this destroys all real responsibility and all effective superintendence. The present system is directed to no definite object. It is regulated by no definite rules. It makes no regular stated provision, either for the proper supply and manufacture of warlike stores, or for enforcing the responsibility of those who fail to make them properly, or for ascertaining the fact that they are made properly."

These words are very strong, and they have been before the country now for a considerable time, and I should like to know what steps have been taken to remedy defects? Looking at the evidence of the Royal Commission and of the Stephen's Commission, I should like to know whether what the Report says is true, or, if it is not entirely true, to what extent it is true; and I should like to know, if it is true, what steps will be taken to remedy this state of things? The Secretary of State is practically responsible; but then there is practically no effective Departmental superintendence over the stores which are issued; and, if that be so, I should be glad to know what steps Her Majesty's Government are taking, or intend to take, in order to remedy this state of things? With the recommendations that have been made, I have, of course, nothing to do. All I wanted to do was to substantiate my contention that reforms of the whole system in the War Office are essential. Some things are absolutely proved, and other matters are indicated. It seems to me to be proved that, making all allowances, such as that our Army is a Volunteer Army, it is proved that, contrasting our Army with that of Germany—which is supposed to be the best organized in the world—and making full allowance for conscription, and all other factors in the case, the cost of our Army enormously exceeds that of Germany. I think it has been proved that there is no efficient Departmental control over the defective stores that are issued. It is proved that the Secretary of State is practically unable to exercise efficient control from the point of view either of efficiency or economy; and it is proved that Estimates and expenditure are prepared, accounted for, and audited in a shape which make it impossible for Parliament to exercise a proper control there. It is indicated that the larger employment of military clerks was desirable; that the expense of the Staff is out of all proportion to the effective strength of the Army, especially of the Auxiliary Forces; that our system is too centralized, and our method of pay cumbersome and extravagant; and it is asserted that great retrenchment is practicable in these directions. On July 26 the Under Secretary of State for War, speaking about Sir James Stephen's Commission's Report in so far as it related to charges of corruption, described this department as being "capable of amendment." I venture to think the words "capable of amendment" are much too weak, and are totally inadequate to describe the state of things which really exists. I hope my noble Friend will to-night give the House and the country some assurance that, in view of the evidence given before these Commissions and this Committee, Her Majesty's Government do not think that the condition of the War Office and the administration of the Army generally can be adequately described by merely saying that it is "capable of amendment." I have not gone into these matters at great length; but I think I have substantiated my case in showing that reform is urgently required. I most earnestly hope Her Majesty's Government will be able to afford their approval to the proposition. I do not expect, and no sane man could expect, such an Augean stable to be cleaned out in a short time; but I do hope the Government will do something to grapple with the evils which exist. I hope there is a distinct understanding that they do appreciate and understand the grave scandals which have been brought about, and that they are determined to seriously grapple with them. I thank your Lordships for listening to what has been a rather long statement; and I wish, before I sit down, to apologize to the House for not having at hand the quotations which my noble Friend asked for. I beg to move the Resolution which stands in my name.

Moved to resolve, "That reforms are urgently required in the system of administration of the Army."—(*The Earl of Dunraven.*)

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for WAR (Lord Harris) said, the noble Earl had asked their Lordships to agree to a Resolution that the question of organization of the War Department was urgent, and he had based his argument upon the Report of the Royal Commission, over which Sir James Fitzjames Stephen presided, and the Report of Evidence taken before the Estimates Committee of the House of Commons. Although he did not quarrel with the noble Earl in the least for the voluminous references he had made to the evidence taken before the Estimates Committee, he would point out that that was merely a Report of Evidence, and did not include anything like all the witnesses that were to be called as representing other Departments of the War Office. The Committee itself, moreover, had come to no decision at all upon the matter under consideration, unless it were that it had recommended to the House of Commons—and the recommendation had been agreed to—that an independent audit should be made of the Ordnance Department Estimates. Seeing, therefore, that the whole evidence had not been presented, and the whole case for and against the War Department was not before the House of Commons and the country, he submitted that it would be unreasonable to ask their Lordships to give a decision upon a Resolution with which they could not be conversant until the whole case had been presented. Now, with regard to the Report of Sir James Fitzjames Stephen's Commission, he would point out that it was a Commission to inquire into the system of adopting patterns and stores, and how those patterns and stores were obtained and passed into the Army; it was not appointed to inquire into the system of administration as regarded the whole War Department.

There was, however, another Committee, to which to his surprise the noble Earl made no allusion—he referred to the Committee over which Lord Morley presided, and which was appointed by Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, to inquire into the organization and administration of the manufacturing department. The Report of the Committee would have been a very valuable one for the noble Earl's contention, and it really seemed to be a most important Report. It was for that Report that the Secretary of State was waiting before he could decide what changes, if any, were necessary in the system of the War Office. The Report having now come in, he should be able to tell the noble Earl presently what the Secretary of State was prepared to recommend to Parliament. With reference to his criticisms of the manner in which the Estimates were prepared and presented to Parliament, the noble Earl would admit that those now at the War Office were not responsible for the present system. If there was something wrong in the system, he admitted they would be responsible if they did not consider it, and inform the country that they thought a change was necessary. But when this very matter had not been considered by any Commission or Committee of recent years, and it was now under the consideration of the Estimates Committee of the House of Commons, it was most unreasonable to ask those holding responsible positions at the War Office to say what changes were necessary and what those changes should be before all the evidence had had been presented to that Committee. Before stating what changes were feasible, as regarded finance and the system of audit, the Secretary of State would prefer to wait until all the evidence and the Report itself were before him.

The Earl of DUNRAVEN: I did not ask for a statement of the changes to be made.

Lord HARRIS observed that if he substituted the word "reform" instead of "change" he would meet the contention of the noble Earl. Now, to go more into detail the noble Earl stated in no measured terms that the system had resulted in great extravagance and in great partiality, and he quoted the opinion of General Brackenbury. But if he gave support to General Brackenbury's idea there was this difficulty about it—that the great military head who should be responsible to see that both *matériel* and *personnel* were efficient would not be practically responsible unless he was in Parliament, and he would be unable to represent his own view, and the reason by which he supported it, to Parliament except through the mouthpiece of a Secretary of State. Now, he (Lord Harris) could not conceive a Secretary of State content to take a position of that kind unless some responsibility also attached to himself. The noble Earl referred to the desirability of laying down a definite plan of what we required, as regarded both *matériel* and *personnel*, for the protection of this country, the Crown Colonies, and the various parts of the Empire; but the difficulty of foreign affairs here came in, as was shown the other day on a question raised by Lord Chelmsford, and it would be exceedingly difficult for any body of men, however experienced, to say what might be the requirements of this country under conditions which were altogether obscure at present and which might never arise. What the Military Authorities ought to be prepared to do and what they were doing as quickly and surely as they could was to show the country what resources it had at hand, and what were the best means by which those resources might be thoroughly efficient. That was the work which they had taken in hand, and he hoped the Secretary of State would be able before Parliament rose to place it and the country in possession of certain parts of his mobilization scheme. He did not deny that the accounts, as at present made up, did not show as clearly as might be what was the exact cost of each department of the Service; but it would not be very difficult by means of sub-heads to show what extra charges should be applied to particular items under different sub-heads. To a certain extent that was done already, and there was no objection to giving further information by that means. At the same time, he must say he thought there was a well founded objection to any radical change in the present system. The items were, as far as possible, collected under heads which, if they did not give absolutely correct information, still gave clear information up to a certain point, and the noble Earl must remember that these Estimates had been presented year by year to the House of Commons, which had been prepared to accept them in that form. Now there was apparently an objection to that form, and it was difficult to say off-hand what the best form was. He was sure, at all events, that as far as they could the Department would meet those objections. Then the noble Earl had passed on to the Ordnance Vote, and on that he had shown some approval in speaking of General Brackenbury's idea of further decentralization. The noble Earl approved of doing away with the War Office audit altogether instead of having a double audit of the Paymaster and the War Office, but he would remind him that unless he was going to accept the audit of the Paymaster he must have a double audit somewhere. There would have in that case to be a Treasury audit almost as critical as that of the War Office, and the result would not mean economy, since while they might do away with the clerical staff now rendered necessary at the War Office, they would have to increase the staff of the Treasury. The noble Earl had made a reference to the system in use in Germany, and had contended that our system would not compare with it. For his own part, however, he was very doubtful whether the House of Commons would be prepared to deal with the Army accounts in the same way as they were dealt with in Germany. Even in the case of a great military Power like Germany, where everything had to give way to the military element, the system of accounts took two years before expenditure could be checked. When the noble Earl had gone on to speak of the relative cost of the German Army with our own, he thought it was a pity that the noble Earl had not referred to General Brackenbury's statement with regard to the system of accounts kept by each Army Corps—

> "Each army corps is practically its own accountant; each of these 19 army corps itself renders full account of that share of the general Budget which has been allotted to it to spend. This comes up direct to the War Office, of which the financial department is an exceedingly small one; these accounts are practically just added together and passed on as the Provisional Budget of the year to the Chancellor. This Provisional Budget is then first of all accepted always by the Legislature; those accounts are subsequently sent to the Court of Account, the Imperial Audit Office, to be audited. That takes two years. In the audit of these accounts the German Audit Office finds certain items which were not apparently authorized by the Reichstag, those being transfers from one Vote to another, an excess of expenditure upon one particular Vote; in fact, it finds many things in which the actual expenditure does not compare with the original estimate put forward. It sends them back to the War Minister, the War Minister gives the Emperor's statement that those things were necessary; the Audit Office takes that as a sufficient voucher; they consider it as done, and pass these accounts on as passed and audited to the Reichstag: this being two or three years after the expenditure has actually taken place, the Reichstag naturally has nothing to do but to vote the money."

Did the noble Earl think that the House of Commons would ever consent to an audit so superficial as that? The noble Earl had referred to the Non-Effective Vote, and he alluded in particular to certain general officers as drawing high non-effective pay, and suggested that considerable economy might be made in that direction. On that point he thought they must have further evidence before coming to a decision; but, at any rate, whether a mistake has been made or not in the system of retirement, it surely could not be contemplated that the State should break the existing contracts into which it has entered with these and other gallant officers. It must be remembered that the present Government was not responsible for the expenses consequent on the change in the system of retirement. With regard to the Medical Department, that was now engaging the attention of his hon. Friend (Mr. Brodrick), who would consider it during the Recess. The Educational Vote should also have his best attention, and he (Lord Harris) thought economy might be effected there. With regard to the question of the Yeomanry and Volunteers, it was undoubtedly the case that the administrative part had been neglected. Owing to the patriotism of various officers corps had been raised throughout the country, and in many cases corps had been formed of one arm of the Service where another would have been more useful. That had now been checked. If mobilization were necessary, the whole of the Yeomanry, and to a large extent the Volunteers, would be put into the field, and he hoped that the administrative departments would be found orthcoming. The noble Earl had referred to Captain Noble and Major Jones as holding shares in the Elswick Company. He was sure the noble Earl had not intended to say anything that was not absolutely correct, but if he had looked at page 53 of the Report he would have seen that the Committee considered with regard to these officers that not only were the charges unfounded, but there was no foundation to justify their having been made. With regard to the Motion of the noble Earl, he might state, that a Committee of the House of Commons was at present sitting taking evidence as to the financial system of the War Office, and until that Committee had reported it would, of course, be premature to say what reforms would be made. The Reports of the Royal Commission and of Lord Morley's Committee were, however, already before the Secretary of State, and with regard to the matters dealt with in those Reports the Secretary of State would in a few days announce to the House of Commons the changes and reforms upon which he had resolved. He hoped that the noble Earl would be satisfied with this explanation, and withdraw his Motion.

THE EARL OF DUNRAVEN said, he thought it would have had a good effect in the country if the Government had accepted this Motion, and had thus shown that they regarded the necessity for reforms as urgent, but as they would not accept the Resolution he would withdraw it.

LORD DENMAN said, he would never vote for such a Motion as this; he was reminded of words by Lord Houghton—

. . . . "who can know
That Realms and Monarchs may not sink together
Into the deep of blessed eternity,
And love and peace be all the Universe ?"

But this was not the noble Lord's opinion, for he said—"The Sick Man might take up his crutch and conquer those who tried to spoil him." He (Lord Denman) said that our Army and Navy would have the best possible weapons, and if any fault arose in the administration, that the pluck of our soldiers and sailors would remedy it.

Motion (by leave of the House) *withdrawn.*

Lord Harris

IRISH LAND LAW BILL.

(*The Lord Privy Seal.*)

CONSIDERATION OF COMMONS' AMENDMENTS.

Returned from the Commons with several of the amendments made by the Lords to the amendments made by the Commons, and of the consequential amendments made by the Lords to the Bill, *agreed to;* several other amendments made by the Lords *agreed to,* with amendments; and with a consequential amendment to the Bill; several other amendments *disagreed to;* and one amendment to which the Lords have disagreed *insisted on,* for which they assign reasons.

Commons amendments to Lords amendments to Commons amendments, Commons consequential amendment, and Commons reasons for disagreeing to certain of the Lords amendments and for insisting on one of their amendments, *considered* (on motion).

THE LORD PRIVY SEAL (Earl CADOGAN) said, he did not think there would be any disposition on the part of their Lordships to discuss the few Amendments which remained to be dealt with, as their Lordships were probably aware that the other House had agreed to a great many, and the most important, of the Amendments made in this House. The House of Commons had disagreed with some Amendments; but it was his duty to move—

"That this House doth not insist on its Amendments with which the other House had not agreed, and agreed to the Amendments of the other House."

Motion *agreed to.*

Commons Amendments *agreed to;* and the Lords Amendments to which the Commons have disagreed *not insisted on.*

PARLIAMENT—SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of SALISBURY) said, that as there was no Business on the Notice Paper for Monday, their Lordships would not meet again till Tuesday, when there would be a Royal Commission. They would then, as usual, adjourn till Thursday.

House adjourned at a quarter before Seven o'clock, to Tuesday next, a quarter before Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, 19*th August*, 1887.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILLS—*Second Reading*—Copyhold Enfranchisement * [359].
Committee—Labourers' Allotments [329]—R.P.
Committee—Report—Coal Mines, &c. Regulation [130-383].
Committee — Report — Third Reading — Metropolitan Police (*re-comm.*) * [285], and *passed.*
Considered as amended—Post Office Savings Banks and Government Annuities [344].
Withdrawn—Revenue * [365]; Herring Fishery (Scotland) * [372]; Mining Accidents Insurance (Scotland) * [343].

IRISH LAND LAW BILL. [*Lords*].

Reasons for disagreeing to certain of the Amendments made by The Lords to the Amendments made by the Commons, and for insisting on an Amendment to which the Lords have disagreed, *reported*, and *agreed to:*—To be communicated to The Lords.

QUESTIONS.

ARMS LICENCES (IRELAND) — JOHN AND CORNELIUS BRENNAN, CO. CLARE.

MR. COX (Clare, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If the licences to have and carry arms, granted to John and Cornelius Brennan, Clonmoney, Bunratty, County Clare, have been revoked; and, if so, for what reason?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said, the licences to have and carry arms granted to John and Cornelius Brennan had been revoked because they were not considered proper persons to have and carry arms.

NATIONAL EDUCATION (IRELAND)—MODEL SCHOOLS — DEDUCTIONS FROM FEES DUE TO TEACHERS.

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland have deducted 20 per cent from the amount of pupils' fees due to the teachers of their Model Schools for the quarter ending 31st March, 1887, and £4 per annum from the salary of each assistant; whether in the Model Schools examined since 31st March, 1887, the results earned have been withheld; whether Her Majesty's Government will direct the Irish Board of National Education to pay to the teachers these sums deducted without further delay; and, whether the Government will interfere to prevent any further similar encroachments on the small incomes of these teachers?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The Commissioners of National Education report that they have deducted 20 per cent from the amount of the pupils' fees accruing to the teachers of model schools for the quarter ended the 31st of March, 1887, and £1 from the special supplemental salary of each assistant therein. The results fees accruing on examinations held since March last have been provisionally withheld. This action was unavoidable in consequence of the falling off in the receipts of school fees last year, causing a deficiency of £160 in the sum of £2,000 due to Her Majesty's Exchequer out of the fees. The £160 deducted cannot be refunded, since the full amount of the £2,000 must be paid to the Exchequer. But the teachers, by reason of this full payment to the Exchequer, secure their results fees and other conditional awards, amounting in the aggregate to about £5,000.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—THE NATIONAL FORESTERS' EXCURSION AT BALLYMENA.

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether, after the firing at Ballymena Station, on Sunday the 7th August, by the National Foresters' Excursion Party, the police in Belfast were informed by telegraph of the occurrence; and, whether, after this, the police in Belfast made any attempt to disarm those in possession of revolvers; and, if not, who is responsible for this, and the consequent retention of fire-arms by the National Foresters?

MR. MACARTNEY (Antrim, S.) also asked, whether, previous to the passage of the first excursion train, containing the Irish National Foresters, through Ballymena on 7th August, the station was, with the exception of a few policeman, entirely cleared; whether shots, beginning at the third carriage from the locomotive and proceeding from all the other carriages, were fired at a number of people who were on their way to church, on the road at the railway bridge, resulting in the injuries which have been reported; whether, thereupon, remonstrances were immediately made at the railway station, in reply to which assurances were given that telegraphic instructions would at once be sent to Belfast, to have those who fired from the train made amenable; and, if so, by whom were these assurances given; and, if by the police, were they carried out at once; whether a strong body of police were drawn up at the railway station at Belfast; whether Town Inspector Cameron had charge of the police arrangements there; and, if not, who had; whether he, or any other Constabulary official in Belfast, received intimation of the occurrences at Ballymoney and Ballymena; and, what action, if any, was taken in consequence?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: I am informed that when the first train arrived at Ballymena there was only one policeman on the platform. A few stones had been thrown at the train before it reached Ballymena, where shots were fired from the train, as stated, at a number of people, some of whom were returning from church. No remonstrances were made at the station immediately afterwards; but the stationmaster telegraphed to Belfast, and this telegram Head Constable Murdoch heard of when on his way to, and about a quarter of a mile from, the station at Belfast. He at once sent word to his officers who were in charge of the police arrangements at various points in the town, and just as he himself arrived at the station the train came in. There was no force of police at the station; and it would have been impossible to have collected such a force in time to search the train with 500 excursionists. The police appear to have done all in their power. The day was Sunday. The telegraph office at Ballymena was closed, and a message which the police succeeded in getting transmitted by the railway wire was not delivered to the Belfast police until long after the train had arrived.

MR. JOHNSTON asked the right hon. and gallant Gentleman, whether he would consider the expediency of proclaiming this Association as a dangerous Association under the Criminal Law Amendment Act?

COLONEL KING-HARMAN said, he was afraid not.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.) wished to ask the right hon. and gallant Gentleman, whether the disturbances, the details of which he had just quoted, occurred subsequent to a wanton attack made on the excursionists by a mob of men from a distance; whether the excursionists had given previous notice of their excursion to the police; and, whether the Government would consider the propriety of holding an inquiry into all the facts of the case?

COLONEL KING-HARMAN, said, there seemed to be a certain amount of rough conduct on both sides at Portrush. A certain number of police had been guarding a tramway at Portrush for the purpose of preserving order. He concluded from the fact of the police having been in such force at Portrush that notice of the excursion had been received by the police and duly acted on. Her Majesty's Government did not see any reason for granting an investigation into the matter.

MR. SEXTON wished to get a frank and clear answer from the right hon. and gallant Gentleman on this point. Did this disturbance originate, or did it not, in an attack made upon the excursionists by a mob of men who went to Portrush from Coleraine for the purpose?

MR. MACARTNEY desired to ask, whether or not it was a fact that the only persons charged with riotous conduct at Ballymena before the magistrates belonged to the excursion party?

COLONEL KING-HARMAN said, he had no information as to the persons who were charged; but there was no firing until after they left Careysford Station. It appeared that the excursionists took in a large quantity of liquor at Portrush; and probably it was beginning to tell after they left Careysford Station.

MR. SEXTON said, the right hon. and gallant Gentleman had not touched his question. The question he asked was this—Whether this body of excursionists, having given notice to the police of their excursion to Portrush, on their arrival at Portrush were attacked by a mob of men who came many miles from another town for the purpose?

[No reply.]

Cries of "Answer" *from the Irish Benches.*

Mr. SEXTON: He has no answer.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order!

THE CHARITY COMMISSIONERS—PAYMENT OF RENT-CHARGES ON SMALL CHARITY ESTATES.

Sir WALTER FOSTER (Derby, Ilkeston) asked the Vice President of Committee of Council on Education, Whether his attention has been directed to the statements of the Charity Commissioners in their 34th Report on the necessity for summary proceedings to compel payment of rent-charges in the case of small charity estates; whether he will introduce a Bill next Session to enable—

> "The rights of charities in cases of this description to be summarily asserted, and the further waste and abstraction of property dedicated to a charitable and therefore a public use prevented;"

and, whether he will grant a Return of the names, addresses, and descriptions of the persons who have within the last five years withheld, or attempted to withhold, the payment of a rent-charge or other sum to a charity, and of which withholding, or attempted withholding, notice has been given to the Charity Commissioners?

The VICE PRESIDENT (Sir William Hart Dyke) (Kent, Dartford): Evidence was given before the Select Committee which inquired into the operation of the Charitable Trusts Acts in 1884 as to the necessity of facilitating by summary legal proceedings the prevention of the waste and abstraction of charity property in regard to the payment of rent-charges; and the Report of the Committee recommended the extension of the powers of the Charity Commissioners in the direction indicated by the Bill of 1883. Until it has in each case been legally determined whether the withholding, or attempting to withhold, the payment of rent-charge to a charity is or is not in accordance with the rights of the parties it would be obviously improper to give the Return asked for, which might have the effect of prejudicing the position of individuals who are doing no more than asserting their legal rights; but the whole matter shall receive my careful attention.

LABOURERS' (IRELAND) ACT—THE KINSALE UNION.

Mr. HOOPER (Cork, S.E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, How many cottages have been authorized to be erected under the Labourers' (Ireland) Act in the Kinsale Union; and, who is responsible for the dilatoriness with which the Acts are being put in force there, whether the Board of Guardians or the Local Government Board?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said, the Local Government Board had authorized, under the Labourers' (Ireland) Act, the erection of 42 labourers' cottages in the Kinsale Union. The conditional order was made on the 6th of May and became absolute on the 28th of June. There was no unnecessary delay in the matter on the part of the Local Government Board; and there was no doubt that the Guardians, as soon as they had made the necessary arrangements to obtain possession of the land, would proceed with the erection of the houses.

WAR OFFICE—THE VALISE EQUIPMENT OF VOLUNTEERS.

Mr. MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether, seeing the importance of training men to carry a kit, the Government could see their way to serve out the valise equipment to Volunteers, which is now being disused by the Army and replaced by one of a newer pattern; at what price great coats could be issued to the Volunteer Force from Government stores; and, whether, in supplying heavy guns to corps, one or two field batteries could not be attached to city and town corps, which could be exercised in combination with the infantry?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. E. Stanhope) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): I am afraid that the valise equipment now being surrendered by the Line is all required for the Militia. Great-coats without capes could be supplied at prices ranging from 12*s.* 9*d.* for the Infantry to 18*s.* for the Artillery and Engineer Volunteers; capes would range from 4*s.* 8*d.* to 7*s.* 2*d.* A limited number of part-worn great-coats might be supplied at cheaper rates. It is probable that in allocating the batteries of position several will be appropriated to Volunteer corps whose headquarters are situated in large cities.

In reply to Mr. Tomlinson (Preston),

Mr. E. STANHOPE said, the great-coats supplied at 12*s.* 9*d.* would be new ones.

EGYPT—ARABI PASHA AND OTHER EXILES—AN AMNESTY.

Mr. EVELYN (Deptford) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether, in view of the recent release of Zebehr Pasha Her Majesty's Government would be disposed to urge on the Egyptian Government the advisability of granting to Arabi Pasha and other Egyptian exiles a general amnesty for political offences?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Sir James Fergusson) (Manchester, N.E.): I cannot hold out any hope that Her Majesty's Government will advise this step.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—MAJOR TRAILL.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If it is a fact that no life has ever been taken in any district in Ireland under Major Traill's charge, and if such districts were then almost free from crime; whether Major Traill was warned by Government, three times within five months, that his assassination had been arranged for, and that he should never go about without police protection; whether he has any evidence in his possession that Major Traill's assassination was subscribed for in Joe Mullet's public-house, Dorset Street, Dublin, in 1882; and, whether the Government propose, in any special manner, to recognise his services?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The Government greatly deprecate Questions of this nature being asked about public officers; and they do not consider that any good could accrue to the Public Service, or to Major Traill himself, by answering them in detail.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Will the right hon. and gallant Gentleman be good enough to say why he has given a different style of answer to me from that which he gave to hon. Gentlemen opposite?

Colonel KING-HARMAN: Because it is a different style of Question.

WAR OFFICE (ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT)—THE NEW RIFLE.

Mr. HANBURY (Preston) asked the Secretary of State for War, How long the War Office Committees on the subject of a new rifle have been sitting, and when it is expected that a definite decision will be arrived at; whether any decision has yet been arrived at as to the bore; and, whether it has been decided that it will be in any case smaller than that of the Enfield Martini?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. E. Stanhope) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): My hon. Friend will find a full account of the Special Committees on the subject of the new rifle at page 22 of the Report of the Royal Commission. The bore of the new rifle will be smaller than that of the Enfield-Martini. Experiments are being tried with several barrels, and I am assured that we may hope for a decision on the whole subject before long; but I am not yet able to fix a date.

Mr. HANBURY asked, how long these Committees had been sitting?

Mr. E. STANHOPE said, that the Committee on a new magazine rifle had been sitting since last year, and no Committee on the new rifle since 1881.

Mr. HANBURY asked, how many Enfield Martini rifles had been made, and what use they would be?

Mr. E. STANHOPE said, that nearly 100,000 had been made, and that they had been of the greatest value for the use of the troops until the new magazine rifle was issued.

WAR OFFICE (ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT)—THE NEW SWORD-BAYONET.

Mr. HANBURY (Preston) asked the Secretary of State for War, What is the length and strength of the new sword bayonet now being served out to the Navy; in what principal respects it differs from the old cutless bayonet;

and, what steps were taken before manufacture to ensure complete agreement between the Admiralty and the War Office as to the hardness and strength of the new weapon?

THE SURVEYOR GENERAL OF ORDNANCE (Mr. NORTHCOTE) (Exeter) (who replied) said: The sword-bayonet now in course of issue to the Navy is 18¼ inch long. It is required to stand, before deviating from the perpendicular, a vertical pressure of 160 lb. and a spring of one inch without taking a permanent set. It differs from the sword-bayonet now withdrawn from the Navy in being 7¼ inch shorter and 6 ounces lighter. The metal is differently distributed, and the cutlass guard is absent. This sword-bayonet was originally introduced for the Enfield Martini rifle, on the recommendations of the Special Committee on Small Arms; and on Sir Henry Hussey Vivian's Committee recommending that the naval sword-bayonet should be replaced, either by the triangular bayonet or by the Enfield Martini sword-bayonet, the Admiralty chose the latter.

MR. HANBURY asked, whether it was of the same pattern as the weapon made by Messrs. Wilkinson?

MR. NORTHCOTE: Yes.

COMMONS (ENGLAND AND WALES)—REGULATION OF ABERDOVEY COMMON, MERIONETH.

MR. T. E. ELLIS (Merionethshire) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether an application was made in 1883 for the regulation of Aberdovey Common; whether he can state what obstacles exist to prevent the issue of the regulation; and, whether there is any prospect that these obstacles will soon be removed?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. STUART-WORTLEY) (Sheffield, Hallam) (who replied) said: I am informed by the Land Commissioners that an application for the regulation of Aberdovey Common was made in December, 1882. The obstacles that exist to prevent the regulation are that the necessary consents could not be obtained. The Land Commissioners are not aware that there is any prospect of these obstacles being removed. They have no knowledge of the extent of the waste or common mentioned; nor are they aware of the enclosure of any portion of such waste or common land.

LAW AND JUSTICE (SCOTLAND)—SHERIFF SUBSTITUTES.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kircaldy, &c.) asked the Lord Advocate, If there is any truth or foundation for the assertion pnblicly made by an important judicial officer in his own name that he (the Lord Advocate) has "avowed" a "policy of putting a stop to the chronic system of promoting Sheriff Substitutes?"

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): I have already answered this Question in this House in the negative. Appointments of Sheriff Substitutes to be Sheriffs have had my hearty and openly expressed approval. But I have held the opinion, and stated it long before I had the prospect of having any responsibility in the matter—that it ought not to become an invariable rule in any place that no one but a Sheriff Substitute should be appointed Sheriff.

CRIMINAL LAW—ISRAEL LIPSKI, CONVICTED OF MURDER.

MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.W.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, If it be true that Lipski's solicitor, Mr. Hayward, was unable to obtain a sight of the bottle labelled "Camphorated Oil, Ball and Co." until Thursday; whether, on account of this delay, he will give more time to collect the necessary evidence; and, when the Home Office contemplates releasing the unfortunate man from this position of uncertainty?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): The phial in question was taken to Mr. Hayward's office on Monday, the 15th, by the Inspector, and shown to Mr. Hayward's clerk (Mr. Hayway being absent). The clerk took a sketch of it, and was informed that the phial was in the custody of the Inspector, who would meet Mr. Hayward at any time by appointment and show him the phial. To prevent mistakes this message was repeated the next morning. Mr. Hayward was informed by me on the 16th that the police could not part with the phial; but that it could be seen at any time by any person he desired, in the presence of the police. No application has been made by Mr. Hayward to have the bottle shown to anybody for the purpose of identification. On Wednesday, the 17th, Mr. Hayward asked the police for leave to take the bottle away to have it photographed, and the Inspector refused to produce the phial for this purpose, or at all. This is probably the incident to which the hon. Member's Question refers. On the 18th Mr. Hayward complained to me by letter and in person. I sent for the Inspectors; and, in Mr. Hayward's presence, gave orders that Mr. Hayward should be allowed to have the phial photographed, and repeated the orders as to showing it. Mr. Hayward has not since made any application either to see or to photograph the phial. I can hold out no expectation that the respite can be further extended.

MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM asked a further Question, which was quite inaudible.

MR. MATTHEWS: As as present advised, I am quite unable to do so. I am giving the most anxious care and consideration to all the materials that have been laid before me; and upon the materials that are before me at present I can hold out no expectation of a further respite.

Subsequently,

MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM: I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he is aware that a Petition signed by 100 Members of Parliament, is to be presented to him to-morrow in favour of the condemned man Lipski; and, whether, in view of that fact, he will reconsider his decision?

MR. MATTHEWS: I have understood that such a Petition is in preparation; but I must formally protest against interference with the ordinary course of the administration of justice by Questions in the House.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I wish to ask the Home Secretary, whether it is true that Mr. Buchner's evidence in connection with the Lipski trial shows that a bottle precisely corresponding to the one found on the scene of the murder was in the possession of a man who was not Lipski; and whether that fact is not sufficient to throw such reasonable doubt upon the guilt of the convict as to entitle us to insist upon a further respite?

MR. MATTHEWS: I have received a full report of what has been alleged; and I have given my earnest attention to it, with a perfectly open and impartial mind. More than that I decline to say.

ARMY (AUXILIARY FORCES) — THE VOLUNTEER FORCE — MARCHING COLUMN.

MR. NEVILLE (Liverpool, Exchange) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether His Royal Highness the Field Marshal Commander-in-Chief has expressed a desire that marching columns should be encouraged in the Volunteer Force; whether sanction was refused for a marching column of about 300 men in Liverpool, at Whitsuntide, on the ground of a slight technical irregularity in the form of application, after 10 days' delay; and whether such refusal was communicated too late to allow of the irregularity being remedied?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): The desire to encourage marching columns of Volunteers is proved by a Circular issued this year sanctioning a marching allowance for Volunteers so engaged. The particular case referred to was one in which it was found that the application to form a marching column had emanated from a junior officer without the knowledge and against the wishes of his Commanding Officer. Under these circumstances, the General Officer Commanding the Northern District was unable to entertain the proposal.

ADMIRALTY—ROYAL NAVAL RESERVED CRUISERS.

CAPTAIN COLOMB (Tower Hamlets, Bow, &c.) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, What is the estimated total subvention annually payable to the Peninsular and Oriental Company by the Admiralty under the proposed arrangement for the right of pre-emption, or hire as armed cruisers or transports, of vessels belonging to that Company; whether such amount will be in addition to the East Indian and China Mail Postal Contract annual subsidy; whether the Admiralty made these arrangements for subvention with the Peninsular and Oriental Company subsequent to the approval by the House of the mail contract with that Company; and, if not, why this House was not informed before approving of the mail contract that the Admiralty had arranged for expenditure on the Peninsular and Oriental Company for such subvention purposes in addition to the mail subsidy; and, whether the Correspondence between the Admiralty and the Peninsular and Oriental Company relative to the subvention of steamers belonging to that Company will be in the hands of Members before Vote 10 of the Navy Estimates is taken?

THE FIRST LORD (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing): I stated yesterday, at some length, the nature of the arrangements made, and the sum payable annually, for the use and hire of vessels belonging to the Peninsular and Oriental Company—namely, £3,500 in respect of the *Victoria*, *Britannia*, and *Oceana* respectively. This sum is in addition to the mail postal contract; but the mail contract has been utilized, as in the case of the Cunard and White Star Companies, so that the use of the vessels carrying the mails may, under certain contingencies, be economically secured to the State. These arrangements were made subsequent to the approval by the House of the mail contract; the correspondence and agreement in all probability will not be in the hands of Members before Vote 10 of the Navy Estimates is taken. The first sum payable under the arrangement will not be made until after the commencement of the next financial year.

HEREDITARY OFFICES—THE MASTER OF THE HAWKS.

MR. HANBURY (Preston) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Who holds the office of Master of the Hawks, the salary of which is paid out of the Consolidated Fund; what is now the nature of the duties, and the amount of such salary; what is meant by the statement in the Finance Accounts that such salary is "first charged" upon London; by whom is this official appointed; and, what steps, if any, will be taken to abolish an office which is apparently a sinecure?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): This office is held by the Duke of St. Albans. I am not aware that he has any duties to perform. The sum payable is £965. By the Act 29 & 30 *Vict.* c. 62 a number of payments originally charged on the land revenues of the Crown, including the payment now in question, were transferred to the Consolidated Fund. The payment to the Master of the Hawks was originally charged on the land revenues derived from the City of London. The office is hereditary. It will be the duty of Her Majesty's Government to consider the Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Perpetual Pensions.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): Does the hon. Gentleman know that the evidence given before the Committee proves that there are no duties attached to the office?

[No reply.]

THE WRECK COMMISSIONERS COURT—THE NAUTICAL ASSESSORS.

MR. PROVAND (Glasgow, Blackfriars, &c.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Who appointed the late Captain Beasley and Captains Castle and Parfitt as assessors in the Court of the Wreck Commissioner, which recently held the inquiry into the Wreck of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company's steamer *Tasmania*; whether the three assessors above-named are retired officers of the Peninsular and Oriental Company; whether the late Captain Beasley was, until his death, and Captains Castle and Parfitt are, in receipt of retiring allowance from the Peninsular and Oriental Company; and why, in appointing assessors to the Wreck Court to hold the above inquiry, in which the Peninsular and Oriental Company's method of manning their vessels was substantially on its trial, assessors were appointed who had been in the employ of that Company?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): These officers were appointed by me to act as assessors in this inquiry, they being next on the rota on the list of nautical assessors. I am informed that they were retired officers of the Peninsular and Oriental Company, but that they were not in receipt of any retiring allowance from that Company. I was not at the time of their appointment aware, and the Papers in the Office do not show, that they had served in that Company. I am informed by the Wreck Commissioner that they conducted this inquiry in the most upright and impartial manner.

Mr. PROVAND asked, if the right hon. Gentleman would have appointed them if he had known all the circumstances?

Mr. MATTHEWS said, that was a hypothetical question, which it was difficult to answer. The list of nautical assessors was reformed every three years; and, as a matter of course, those interested in any particular Company which might be concerned, as, for instance, in the matter of retiring allowance, were passed over.

REGISTRATION (IRELAND) — INCIDENCE OF EXPENSES.

Mr. W. A. MACDONALD (Queen's County, Ossory) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he will consider, during the Recess, the Resolutions passed by so many Boards of Guardians in Ireland, urging that the amounts paid to clerks of unions for registration purposes shall, in future, be paid out of the National Exchequer, instead of being contributed, as at present, out of local rates?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said, the proposal to make this charge an Imperial one could not be carried out without legislation. The matter was one which concerned the whole Kingdom rather than Ireland exclusively. It was a question for the Treasury, rather than for the Irish Executive, whether they would sanction the introduction of a Bill on the subject.

WAR OFFICE—QUARTERMASTERS—PROMOTION.

Mr. MACDONALD CAMERON (Wick, &c.) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether it is according to military custom to pass over officers when duly recommended for promotion, except in favour of such as have performed special acts of service in the field; and, if so, on what principle have the Quartermasters of the Army, having the rank of Captain, been passed over by the recent promotion to the rank of Major of two Lieutenant Quartermasters; whether, seeing how disadvantageous a position the officers who have been so passed over are placed in, he will consider the desirability of granting the rank of Major to such Quartermasters as may have 15 years, and upwards, of commissioned service; whether a recent Warrant takes away from officers retiring after the 31st December next the step of honorary rank hitherto given on retirement; whether many officers were already entitled to this step before the Warrant abrogating it was published; and, if so, whether he will cause this hardship to be redressed; whether the maximum retired pay, or pension, granted to Quartermasters is the same as the minimum granted to all others for 20 years' full pay service; and, whether, in view of the resulting injury to those officers, he will take steps to remove the grievance?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. E. Stanhope) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): I should like to remind the hon. Member that great improvements in position and pay have during the last few years been accorded to Quartermasters, while no single privilege has been withdrawn from them except that, in common with all other officers, they cease to carry into retirement a rank in which they have never done a day's duty, and which carries no substantive advantage whatever. Although seniority is allowed some weight in selections for promotion, the fundamental rule is promotion by selection for ability, and other qualifications good for the Service. Further, as Quartermasters hardly ever serve other than singly, there is no question of one selected for promotion exercising command over others, who consequently are not in any worse position than they held before. No officer could have been entitled to the step of honorary rank on retirement unless he actually retired; and any Quartermaster whose service entitles him to retire now with honorary rank can secure the rank by retiring during the present year. The maximum retired pay of a Quartermaster is the same as the maximum of every combatant officer who has not 23 years' service.

COAL MINES – COLLIERY DISASTER AT UDSTON, LANARKSHIRE.

MR. MASON (Lanark, Mid) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether the Report on the Udston Colliery disaster is now ready; and, when it will be laid upon the Table of the House?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. STUART-WORTLEY) (Sheffield, Hallam) (who replied) said, the Report would be presented to Parliament in the course of a few days.

ADMIRALTY—THE LATE NAVAL MANŒUVRES—CASUALTIES.

MR. PROVAND (Glasgow, Blackfriars, &c.) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, When he will lay upon the Table of the House detailed Reports on the casualties, accidents, and breakdowns which took place on board Her Majesty's ships during the late Naval Manœuvres, with the view of satisfying the public mind in reference to the numerous statements in the public Press respecting the serious character of the above occurrence?

THE FIRST LORD (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing): I propose, as I have before stated, to lay such a Report on the Table of the House, which will show that the casualties and accidents on board Her Majesty's ships during the late Naval Manœuvres have been exaggerated.

DEPRESSION OF TRADE — CENSUS OF THE UNEMPLOYED IN EAST LONDON.

MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) asked the President of the Local Government Board, Whether he is now in a position to make any further statement as to the Census of the unemployed in East London?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's) said, the Census was in the hands of the printer, and he hoped it would not be long delayed. It would be in the possession of Members, he hoped, in the course of 10 days or so.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—THE TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION BILL.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central), asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether, having regard to the fact that the Amendments on the Paper are, with few exceptions, confined to minor points of detail, the discussion of which is not likely to occupy much time, it is not possible for Her Majesty's Government to reconsider the postponement of the Technical Instruction Bill, and to press it forward in the course of the present Session?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I am afraid it will not be in my power to alter the determination at which we have arrived, having regard to the period of the Session; but I hope, as I stated yesterday, that the Technical Instruction Bill will be one of the first measures to be taken up by Parliament at the commencement of next Session.

MR. MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright): Does that answer also apply to the Scotch Technical Education Bill?

MR. W. H. SMITH: That depends very much on the Scotch Members themselves.

THE EXECUTIVE (IRELAND) — THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY TO THE LORD LIEUTENANT — HIS EXECUTIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE POWERS.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether, no opportunity having been afforded to this House of discussing the creation of a new office, by the appointment of an Under Secretary for Ireland, it is intended that the gentleman who now fills that post should exercise Executive and Administrative powers in Ireland during the Recess; and, if so, whether the House will be informed what the character and extent of these powers will be?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): In answer to this Question, I have to repeat very much the replies I gave to Questions on the same subject in April. The relation of the Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland to the Head of his Department is the same as that of any other Parliamentary Under Secretary to the Head of his Department. He has not, and cannot have, any independent Executive and Administrative powers and responsibilities; and, therefore, cannot exercise them during the Recess.

THE EGYPTIAN EXILES — ARABI PASHA.

Mr. W. A. MACDONALD (Queen's Co., Ossary) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether he has observed a statement in *The Echo*, of the 15th instant, that Arabi Pasha has suffered severely from his long imprisonment; whether it is intended that the imprisonment of Arabi shall continue to the end of his life; and, whether the Government will consider his case with a view to releasing him, if such a step can be taken consistently with the interests of the British Empire?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): No information has been received by Her Majesty's Government that Arabi Pasha has suffered in health. The sentence pronounced on him in 1882 was death, which was commuted into perpetual exile, the commutation to become void should he return to Egypt. Her Majesty's Government do not consider that such a step as his release would be consistent with the interest of this country, or of Egypt, or with the justice of the case.

CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDURE (IRELAND) ACT, 1887 — PROCLAMATION OF THE NATIONAL LEAGUE.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether it is a fact that the National League has been proclaimed in accordance with the announcement made by the Prime Minister in "another place?"

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman, whether the Proclamation is general, and extends to the National League as a whole; or whether it is directed against the League in certain districts in Ireland to be hereafter defined?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): Yes, Sir. It may be for the convenience of the House that I should announce that the Lord Lieutenant, with the advice of the Privy Council, has to-day, by a Proclamation which I have already laid on the Table of the House, declared the National League to be a dangerous Association, under Section 6 of the Crimes Act; and has thus taken power under that Statute to prohibit and suppress that Association by order in any district where such a step may be required to prevent intimidation or interference with the administration of the law. I am desired by my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House to say that, if it is desired to take the opinion of the House upon the action of the Irish Executive in this matter, in the manner provided by the Act, Thursday next will be reserved for the purpose.

Mr. SEXTON: I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman, is the House to understand that the powers are taken to suppress the National League simply as an Association tending to interfere with the administration of the law; and whether that is the sole ground, defined in the 6th clause, under which the League is attacked?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The two subheads of the 6th clause which are mentioned in the Proclamation are as follows —perhaps I had better read a sentence from the Proclamation itself—"Whereas we are satisfied that there exists in Ireland an Association known by the name of the Irish National League——"

Mr. J. O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.): And will exist in spite of it.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: "And that said"—[*Interruption.*]

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: "Association in parts of Ireland promotes and incites to acts of violence and intimidation——"

Mr. J. O'CONNOR: It is a lie! ["Order!"]

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: "And interferes with the due administration of the law, now We hereby," and then the Proclamation goes on.

Mr. T. C. HARRINGTON (Dublin, Harbour): Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman a Question arising out of this matter. I wish to ask him, whether he is aware that nearly all the branches of the National League in Ireland at the present time are engaged in the work of registration; whether he is aware that that is the only Association in Ireland that is opposed to the Conservative Party in the work of registration; and whether the suppression of the National League at this time is done solely for the purpose of paralyzing the efforts of the Association, and to aid the Conservative Party in Ireland in getting strength at the next election?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: No, Sir; my information does not in the least coincide with that which appears to be possessed by the hon. Member; but I may inform him that no branch of the National League which occupies itself solely in registration of voters work will be interfered with under this Proclamation.

MR. SEXTON: Do we then understand, Sir, that the powers of Clause 7 with regard to the membership and support of the National League do not come into operation until a further Proclamation is issued with regard to particular districts?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The hon. Member is probably aware that any further action is required to be taken by order—any action regarding special districts required to be taken must be taken by order.

MR. SEXTON: And until that Order is issued with regard to any particular district, the powers of Clause 7 do not come into operation?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: That is so.

Subsequently,

MR. SEXTON asked, when the meeting of the Privy Council was held at which the Proclamation was issued declaring the National League to be a dangerous Association, how many, and what members of the Privy Council were present? He would also like to know whether any of the Judges were present at the meeting of the Privy Council?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Of course, Sir, as I have already explained to the House on previous occasions, the Privy Council is not consulted on an occasion of this sort. The meeting of the Council was held in the afternoon. I cannot tell the exact time. There were present Lord Ashbourne, the Vice Chancellor, and the Lord Lieutenant.

MR. SEXTON: Were those the only three Members present?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Yes.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—THE RIOTS AT KENMARE.

MR. J. O'CONNOR (Kerry, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland a Question of which he had given him private Notice. It was, Whether he could give any information to the House relative to the reported conflict between the police and the people at Kenmare; whether it was true that the police made a gross and wanton attack with drawn swords on a peaceable crowd, with the result that several persons were more or less seriously injured; and, whether such attacks on Irish crowds were to form part of the policy of Her Majesty's Government during the coming winter?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): No Report has yet been received with regard to the alleged attack on the people in Kenmare.

CRIMINAL LAW (SCOTLAND) PROCEDURE (No. 2) BILL.

In reply to Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.),

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster) said, it would be rather dangerous to overload the particular day on which it was suggested to take the Scotch Business, if the Criminal Law (Scotland) Procedure (No. 2) Bill could be dealt with at any other time. Certainly, this Bill would not be taken at 3 o'clock in the morning if there was the slightest probability of any discussion upon it.

SUPPLY—THE DIPLOMATIC VOTE.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I wish to state that we shall redeem our pledge to the hon. Member for Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce) and proceed with the Diplomatic Vote on Saturday, the Sitting to be held under the Standing Order which regulates Wednesday Sittings of the House.

MERCHANT SHIPPING—THE LOSS OF THE "CITY OF MONTREAL."

SIR ROBERT FOWLER (London) asked, Whether the Government had received any information as to the sad accident to the *City of Montreal?*

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I am afraid we have no information on the subject.

THE IRISH LAND LAW BILL.

MR. LEA (Londonderry, S.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, If the Government intended to introduce Supplementary Estimates for the working of the Irish Land Law Bill?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): Yes, Sir. It is intended to lay Supplementary Estimates for that purpose on the Table.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

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LABOURERS' ALLOTMENTS BILL.

[BILL 329.]

(*Mr. Ritchie, Mr. Secretary Stanhope, Mr. W. H. Long.*)

COMMITTEE. [*Progress 12th August.*]

[FIRST NIGHT.]

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I must ask the permission of the Committee to make a short statement in reference to this measure, which I think may tend to accelerate the progress of the Bill through Committee. The Committee will be aware that there was a debate upon the second reading of the Bill, and also upon the Motion for going into Committee. At that time I expressed the desire of the Government to consider carefully any proposal which would have the effect of making the Bill a more effective means of carrying out the intention of the Government to provide labourers throughout the country with allotments. I should now like to state to the Committee what the result of the consideration by the Government of those proposals has been. The Committee know already that the Government do not propose to adhere to the provision in the Bill which sets up the Quarter Sessions as the tribunal to whom application was to be made for the issue of a Provisional Order in the event of Parliamentary powers being required for the purchase of land. Secondly, in regard to setting the machine to work. Certain suggestions were made that in the Bill no means were provided by which the Local Authority might be made aware of the desire existing in a particular parish or district for these allotments. I propose to accept an Amendment which provides that on the representation of not less than six registered Parliamentary electors in any parish or district it shall be the duty of the Sanitary Authority to take the representation made to them as to the existence of a desire for these allotments into consideration. There is another question to which some little importance has been attached on both sides of the House—namely, the question of how the managers of the allotments are to be constituted. The provision in the Bill is that they are to be appointed by the Sanitary Authorities both in urban and rural districts. It is now proposed that in cases where representations are made by a certain portion of the locality in a rural district that they desire to elect their own managers rather than have them appointed by the Sanitary Authority, then the election of these local managers shall take place, and that it shall be conducted on the principle that each man shall have one vote, and that they shall vote by ballot.

An hon. MEMBER: One man, one vote.

MR. RITCHIE: Yes; with reference to the proposal that an allotment may consist of either one acre of arable land, or three acres of pasturage, the Government are unable to assent to the proposal that it should be incumbent on the Local Authority to provide three acres of pasturage. What the Government do propose is that the Sanitary Authority may, and in some cases shall provide a sufficient amount of land where it is practicable to meet a demand, if it exists, for common pasturage. There is only one other point with which I will trouble the Committee. It relates to the question of buildings. In the Bill, it was provided that no buildings of any kind should be erected on the land. As I explained to the Committee, although undoubtedly the words of the clause would prevent the erection of a building of any kind, that was not the intention of the Government, our object being only to exclude dwelling houses, and kindred buildings. It is, therefore, proposed to accept an Amendment to provide that greenhouses, toolhouses, pigstyes, and fowlhouses may be erected on allotments, coupled with another Amendment proposed from the other side of the House, that on the vacation of an allotment, neither the Sanitary Authority nor an incoming tenant shall be bound to take such buildings by valuation. I have though it the best course to state what the result of the deliberations of the Government have been, and I hope it may have the effect of clearing the way for the passing of the Bill.

MR. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby): I have listened with attention to the statement which has been made by the right hon. Gentleman, and I would point out to him the great inconvenience the course he has taken involves, not only to Members on this side of the House, but to others on the opposite side who have taken the trouble to put down Amendments which we think the Bill needs. It is quite difficult enough to frame Amendments when one knows what the provisions of a Bill are. The right hon. Gentleman has now suggested very important alterations in the measure, some of which are most excellent, and I was exceedingly glad to hear them. But I think the Committee will see that the Amendments proposed by the Government almost amount, in many respects, to a new Bill, and until we see the form of the Amendments, and the words in which they are to be expressed and the places in which they are to be inserted, I do not see how it is possible, with advantage, to go into Committee this evening. I would, therefore, ask the right hon. Gentleman if he will place on the Paper the Amendments of which he has given Notice, some of which are of the utmost importance, and involve very large principles in the Bill. In some respects they amount to an absolute reconstruction of the Bill; and therefore I will ask the Government to lay these reconstructive clauses on the Table, so as to give us an opportunity of considering them before the Bill is discussed in Committee.

MR. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): I am grateful to the Government for having stated distinctly the course they intend to take. It was by no means an unusual course, and it is one that invariably has met with the general acceptance and agreement of the Committee. With the single exception of the Amendment relating to common pasturage, there are on the Paper Amendments embodying all the concessions the Government have agreed to make. If hon. Members are in earnest in desiring that the Bill should pass into law, and realize the wishes which have been expressed in regard to it, nothing could be more unfortunate than that the Committee should be postponed in order that hon. Members might study the Government Amendments.

MR. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley): May I ask you, Mr Courtney, what is before us?

THE CHAIRMAN: Nothing. I call upon Mr. Staveley Hill, in whose name the first Amendment stands.

Clause 1 (Short Title).

MR. STAVELEY HILL (Staffordshire, Kingswinford): I beg to move the first Amendment, which is to add, at the end of the 1st clause, these words—

> "And this Act and 'The Friendly Societies' Act, 1875,' shall be read and construed together as one Act."

I may mention that the Amendment is one which practically embodies a great number of other Amendments I have placed upon the Paper. The proposition I have to lay before the Committee, on this Amendment, is that the present scheme, as embodied in the Bill, is one which is absolutely unworkable, and therefore I wish to submit a counter-scheme for incorporating the Friendly Societies' Act with the Bill, and constituting the two one Act. If that course is accepted by the Committee, then, by adopting the other Amendments which I have put upon the Paper, I believe we may be able to frame a scheme which will carry out the object we all profess to have in view. I take it that what we desire is to give to the labourer of this country the power of obtaining an allotment in every case in which he may desire one; but it requires a certain amount of faith to induce one to believe that that is the intention of those who have framed this Bill; for nothing more unworkable could have been submitted to Parliament. Before I proceed to show what will be the effect of bringing this Bill and the Friendly Societies' Act together, let me first of all draw the attention of the Committee to the scheme by which it is proposed to work this measure. I think I shall be able to to show my right hon. Friends below me that their scheme, as a whole, cannot be carried out. I believe I shall be in Order in doing so, because there is no other way in which I can show the necessity of adopting the Amendment which I am about to propose. The scheme by which the Government intend to work the Bill is one which has in view two conditions of things. One state of things is the taking of land by agreement, and the other is the adoption of the means employed in the compulsory clauses of the Land Clauses Consolidation Act of 1845 as to the taking of land otherwise than by agreement. I will ask the Committee for a moment to lay aside the taking of land by agreement, and I will proceed to show how unworkable this measure will be if any attempt is made to make use of it for the taking of land for the purpose of allotment, otherwise than by agreement. The second sub-section of the third clause of this Bill mentions the provisions of the Land Clauses Consolidation Act, 1845, and the Acts amending that measure with respect to the purchase and taking of land otherwise than by agreement, and it is proposed to incorporate this Bill with that Act. Now, the Bill provides that Section 178 of the Public Health Act, 1875, shall also be incorporated, but that is merely a clause which deals with the Duchy of Lancaster, and will have no real effect on the question at present before the Committee. The 4th sub-section of the 3rd clause incorporates three sections of the Public Health Act —namely, 176, 296, and 297. It is, however, not necessary to trouble the Committee with the last two of those clauses. One of them is merely a formal clause, and the other lays down certain conditions in regard to a provisional scheme. The clause which is of real importance is that which incorporates the Public Health Act of 1875, or, rather, Section 176 of that Act. Section 176 incorporates not only the Land Clauses Consolidation Act which had been previously incorporated, but it also gives powers with regard to the taking of land otherwise than by agreement. Perhaps I may be allowed, in a very few words, to call the attention of the Committee to what these requirements are, so that they may bear in mind the whole subject-matter in regard to which these clauses are to be applied. First of all, it is required that any scheme it is intended to enact should be ready by the beginning of November—any scheme I mean under which it may be proposed to take land for these allotments, and that such scheme should be advertised for a period of three weeks in the local newspapers. That having been done, it is necessary, in the next place, to deposit plans and comply with other requirements in the month of December. When that has been done the Local Board is to petition the Local Government Board, and the Local Government Board is to send down an officer to inquire whether the scheme is one which can be properly carried out. On being satisfied in that respect the Local Government Board is to empower the Local Board to present a Petition for a Provisional Order, and it is further necessary when the Provisional Order has been granted, that it should be laid upon the Table of this House before any further step can be taken, so that you have, first of all, advertisements in November, the scheme deposited in December, the Local Government Board petitioned, an inquiry by the Local Government Board at the place itself; next the grant of a Provisional Order, and then the Provisional Order to be laid upon the Table of this House. All this is to be done in order to enable a Local Authority to purchase five acres of land to be let out in retail at agricultural prices. Was there ever such a scheme devised? Can anybody imagine that such a scheme is possible? It would be difficult enough if the land could be bought without any of these conditions; but if it is to be bought loaded with all these costs, can it really be let to labourers at any moderate rent? I say that the whole scheme is a delusion. But we have still one step further to go. I have only so far taken the provisions which are included in the 176th section of the Public Health Act; but that 176th Section incorporates the Land Clauses Consolidation Act, and when all the formalities I have mentioned have been gone through it may be necessary to do something further. In the event of the person who owns the land still refusing to sell, there is an appeal to the Justices, if the sum involved is under £50, and if it is above that value the case may be referred to an arbitrator with an umpire or to a jury, so that further expense will be added before the price of the land can be fixed. Under the Land Clauses Act the person selling the land has been held to be entitled, not only to the value of the land, but also to 15 per cent for severance and 10 per cent for compulsory purchase. All these additional costs are to be added to the value of the land itself, and they cannot fail to raise the original value by at least from 150 to 200 per cent. Then I would ask the Committee if I am not justified in saying that so cumbrous a method of proceeding ought not to be adopted? Before passing from this point, let me call the attention of my right hon. Friend the President of the Local Government Board and the First Lord of the Treasury to the fact that this Bill is limited to three years.

MR. RITCHIE: Three years!

MR. STAVELEY HILL: Yes; three years. Sub-section 5 of Clause 3 provides—

> "In construing for the purposes of this section any section or Acts incorporated with this section, this Act shall be deemed to be the Special Act, and the sanitary authority shall be deemed to be the local authority or the promoters of the undertaking as the case requires, and the word 'land' shall have the same meaning as in this Act."

I ask the Committee to take notice that this Act is to be "the Special Act," and is to be so construed in regard to any section that is incorporated in it. And now what are the sections that are incorporated with this section? If the Committee will kindly look at a passage in the clause a few lines above the one I have read—namely, the commencement of Sub-section 4, they will find the following words:—

> "For the purpose of the purchase of land under this section otherwise than by agreement, sections one hundred and seventy-six, two hundred and ninety-six, and two hundred and ninety-seven of the Public Health Act, 1875, shall, so far as consistent with the tenour of this Act, be incorporated with this Act, and apply as if they were herein re-enacted, with the substitution of 'the county authority' for 'the Local Government Board,' and of 'any officer of the county authority appointed for the purpose of an inquiry' for 'inspectors of the Local Government Board.'"

So that the Land Clauses Act is incorporated with this Act, and the whole together are to form the Special Act. Now, that very Land Clause Consolidation Act provides, in Section 123, that no land shall be bought under the Special Act after the lapse of three years from the time of the passing of the Act, so that by this Act, being a Special Act, the power of purchase can only be exercised for three years after the Act has been passed, and at the termination of three years from the passing of this Act those powers will have expired.

MR. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley): May I ask, as a point of Order, whether the hon. and learned Gentleman can discuss the whole of the clauses of the Bill on the Amendment of which he has given Notice?

THE CHAIRMAN: The course which is being pursued by the hon. and learned Gentleman is, no doubt, very inconvenient; but I cannot say that it is out of Order. The hon. and learned Gentleman proposes to alter the 1st clause in the way he has indicated, in order to substitute a different machinery for that provided in the Bill. He is, therefore, in Order, however inconvenient this course may be.

MR. STAVELEY HILL: I can assure the Committee that I will keep as close to the question as I can, and I have no wish to speak out of Order. I have now, however, nearly gone through all that part of the argument which may appear to the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham to be out of Order. I maintain that the Bill is one that can only exist for three years. There is, however, another point to which I desire to call the attention of my right hon. Friend the First Lord of the Treasury. What do the Government propose to do? They are proposing to pass a measure which cannot come into operation until the spring of 1889. No scheme under it can possibly be initiated until the month of November, 1888. It is absurd to say that all the schemes could be prepared by November, 1887, seeing that the Bill itself cannot receive the Royal Assent until the month of September. The result will be that no scheme can be passed until somewhere about the month of March, 1889. Therefore, we are absolutely asked to spend our valuable time at the end of the Session in passing a Bill which has been bottled up until now, and which the country has had no opportunity of discussing, and which, when passed, can only be in operation for something like 18 months. By my Amendment I ask the Committee to incorporate with the Bill the Friendly Societies Act of 1875. That Act brings together all the different Acts which were then in existence, and in which the late Sir Stafford Northcote took so active an interest. In that Act, which is as good an Act as was ever placed upon the Statute Book of this country, there are all kinds of provisions for the registration of what are called "specially authorized societies," which contain elaborate provisions for the auditing of accounts, for the distribution of assets, and for imposing penalties upon persons who contravene the provisions of the law. It contains every provision that can be required to meet the exigencies of a case like the present; and, above all things, it provides that a special officer, appointed in connection with friendly societies, shall be the proper person before whom shall be brought in the initiative schemes of this sort, and who will look after the affairs of the society after it has been constituted. That officer is the Chief Registrar. We have, under that Act, certain societies incorporated for certain purposes; but, as I have said, there are certain other societies mentioned at the end of the list, and which are practically with the same object as proposed by the Bill we are now considering. I may inform my right hon. Friend who is in charge of the Bill that there is only one short clause in that Act which prevents the Act from being put into operation in this matter. If my right hon. Friend will undertake to repeal that clause, I am prepared to say that the Friendly Societies Act will be much more successful than the present Bill of the Government can be. The clause to which I refer is to the effect that some of these specially "authorized societies"—which might be allotment societies—shall hold more than one acre of land. If that clause is repealed and the Friendly Societies Act is put in force in connection with this Bill, I will undertake that before my right hon. Friend can get one single allotment I will bring, at least, 100. If the Government will repeal that clause and incorporate the Friendly Societies Act with this Bill, I would offer no further opposition to the measure, but would allow it to find its way into the waste paper basket, its proper receptacle. I am satisfied that the Bill, in its present shape, will prove altogether unworkable. I do not intend to go into the other difficulties which arise under the clauses of the Bill. Upon those clauses there will be plenty of opportunity of raising a discussion before the measure can pass through Committee; but I will only say that they are difficulties which it is impossible to dispose of in one or two days. There is one question which my right hon. Friend mentioned in his statement, and which is also met by my Amendments. There is not only the difficulty of the mechanism of the Bill as it at present stands, but also the important question as to who is to take the initiative. These difficulties appear to be so important that the noble Lord opposite the Member for Petersfield (Viscount Wolmer) has been driven to relinquish the English language and resort to Latin. I find he proposes to strike out the word "considerable," in order to provide that the authority shall be a "*bonâ fide*" one. If we adopt the Friendly Societies Act that difficulty will be solved at once, because it is there provided that any society may be registered by seven persons having met together, who have taken certain steps with a view of showing that they intend to carry out the society if it is registered. Therefore, in regard to the initiative, there can be no difficulty whatever under the Friendly Societies Act. I am sure that hon. Members desire as well as myself that the passing of the Bill shall not be a mere illusion, and that it is most undesirable to put upon the Statute Book an Act which cannot be carried into operation. I hope that all hon. Members who wish to see allotments of land granted to labourers at a fair rate will support the Amendment which I now beg to move, and by which I am endeavouring to incorporate the machinery of the Bill with the clauses of the Friendly Societies Act:

Amendment proposed,

At end of the Clause, to add the words "and this Act and 'The Friendly Societies Act, 1875,' shall be read and construed together as one Act."—(*Mr. Staveley Hill.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

Mr. RITCHIE: I shall not imitate the example of my hon. and learned Friend, who has professed his earnest desire to provide every labouring man in England with an allotment, but who shows his anxiety to do so by proposing an Amendment which is strictly limited to an endeavour to defeat the whole object of the Bill. I shall confine myself simply and solely to the Amendment before the Committee, and I shall decline to be drawn into the discussion my hon. and learned Friend invites me to pursue, although I am perfectly prepared, when we come to the various clauses my hon. and learned Friend has discussed and his proposed Amendments to those clauses, to meet the arguments he has advanced, or any other arguments which may be advanced by any other Member of the Committee. I desire, however, in dealing with this question, to take the same course I propose to take in dealing with every other Amendment—namely, to confine myself strictly to the Amendment before the Committee. The Amendment of my hon. and learned Friend, if it is adopted by the Committee, is intended to be a prelude to a series of Amendments he has put upon the Paper. It would set up an authority for the execution of the Bill, which would not be in any sense of the word a representative authority. He proposes that wherever any seven persons can be got together in any locality to register themselves as a branch under the Friendly Societies Act, they shall be at once charged with the duty, which, I maintain, should only devolve upon the representatives of the ratepayers, of providing allotments for labourers in villages or urban districts which may entail the security of the rates, and in any sense must entail a considerable amount of responsibility on account of the ratepayers. I should be very loth indeed to make such a proposal on the part of a Government as that which my hon. and learned Friend has made. I am satisfied of this—that there is not a single Member in this House who will be prepared to support the proposal of my hon. and learned Friend to set up as an alternative the buying of allotments or the purchase of land by hypothecating the rates. In no sense of the word can it be said that the authority which my hon. and learned Friend proposes to set up is representative.

Mr. STAVELEY HILL: The authority would be the people themselves.

Mr. RITCHIE: That may be so; but seven representatives of a friendly society are to be charged with certain powers which are voluntary and not compulsory, and which would only be exercised by a representative body.

Mr. STAVELEY HILL: I am sure that my hon. Friend does not intend to misrepresent me. The body which I propose for taking the initiative is a society consisting of allottees not less than seven in number, and they are to be the very men themselves who are to apply for the allotments and who are the labourers.

Mr. RITCHIE: Then the first thing to be done in to become a member of a friendly society. I certainly do not agree at all with the proposal of my hon. and learned Friend. Our first duty is to set up an authority, whether it be a good or a bad authority, and it must be representative of the ratepayers. In my opinion that is the only possible authority to which you can entrust the powers authorized by the Bill.

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I do not think the proposal of the hon. and learned Member ought to be treated in the manner in which it has been treated by the right hon. Gentleman. When I saw the Amendment on the Paper, and before the hon. and learned Member made his very interesting speech, I was a little puzzled to know what connection there was between friendly societies and the great question of cottage allotments. But I think that in the course of the hon. and learned Member's speech he made that point exceedingly plain, and I think very effective. Although I am not prepared to say that the scheme he has suggested as an opposition scheme to that of Her Majesty's Government is a perfect scheme, or that it could be carried out to the perfect satisfaction of everybody, I think there are germs of feasibility in it which entitle it to candid consideration, and I hope the hon. and learned Member will go to a Division upon it. The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board has challenged any Member of the Committee to get up and say a word in favour of the hon. and learned Gentleman's proposal. I cheerfully accept that challenge. I think the proposal the hon. and learned Gentleman has laid before us, and which amounts simply to this—that we should amend the course of procedure in connection with friendly societies by repealing a line and a-half of the Friendly Societies Act of 1875—is not an unreasonable one. The section of that Act which the hon. and learned Gentleman proposes to repeal is this—

> "Provided that nothing herein contained shall authorize any benevolent society to hold land exceeding one acre at any one time."

By repealing those few words and providing, for the purposes of this measure, that the Bill itself and the Friendly Societies Act shall be construed as one Act, we should allow friendly societies, where they are now existing or where they may be instituted, to establish cottage allotments where they may be wanted. There is nothing in the proposal of the hon. and learned Gentleman to compel friendly societies to do anything of the kind. His proposal only amounts to this—that if Her Majesty's Government are really as anxious as they pretend to be in their new-born anxiety—occasioned, no doubt, by their recent defeat at Spalding and other elections — that if they are so anxious to do what they pretend to do for the benefit of every labourer in a country district, they should provide not only one way of doing it, but also a second way. I have no doubt that Her Majesty's Ministers must be jealous of the competition of any other scheme which may rival their own beneficent measure; but I think the hon. and learned Gentleman has made it perfectly clear that, under the provisions and machinery of the Bill of the Government, even modified and altered in any manner their usual agility may suggest, and even supposing that they execute another political somersault in order to curry favour with the constituencies, their Bill will be unworkable for 18 months, and as the measure which is to confer so great a benefit upon the country will only be in operation for three years in all, the actual time at their disposal, in order to allow them to confer the benefits they propose upon the agricultural labourers, will be restricted to a period of 18 months only. Even if it were much more doubtful than it appears to be that the proposal of the hon. and learned Member would work satisfactorily, I maintain that it is fair, at any rate, to give it a chance. It would, at all events, enable those friendly societies which are already in existence to take the matter up, and do something in the interests of the labourers of the country without any unnecessary delay. I do not suppose that even the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board will be prepared to say that his proposal can come into operation without some delay in getting the scheme to work; and, under these circumstances, I think it is only fair that some encouragement should be given to a rival scheme which may prove to be more practicable. Her Majesty's Government ought to show that they are really sincere in this matter. Certainly, their conduct in regard to other matters in the course of this Session has not afforded any indication of their sincerity; and having studied the provisions of this Bill, I cannot conceive that there is anything more absurd than to assume that the Government are desirous of effecting any real and beneficent reform so far as the interests of the labourers are concerned. If they have any such intention, why do they not make the Bill as simple as possible? Why should they evince an indisposition to trust the people? If the Government really intend to do anything for the benefit of the people in this matter, why have they introduced so roundabout and complicated a machinery? Why do they not provide simple machinery for bringing the provisions of the Bill into operation at once? Why do they not place the measure upon a thoroughly representative basis, and provide every labourer with the opportunity of giving his voice in favour of the carrying out of the Bill without any fear of being coerced by his landlord, or the parson, or the squire? They have deemed it preferable to introduce a complicated machinery, which can only be compared to the use of Nasmyth's steam hammer for the purpose of crushing a gnat. And what does all this expensive machinery amount to, even with the modifications which are proposed to be introduced into it? Only to this—that the Court of Quarter Sessions is not to have any place in the management of this measure. Even with the modifications the right hon. Gentleman proposes to introduce, the arrangements are of so complicated and expensive a character that it is only a delusion and a snare to suppose that any benefit can accrue to the agricultural labourer. The expense will be so enormous that no sensible ratepayer in the district will have anything to do with it. The machinery by which these allotments are to be managed involves a complicated species of representation by an elected body.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member is quite out of Order in discussing that matter.

Mr. CONYBEARE: I am not going to discuss it.

THE CHAIRMAN: Or in referring to it in any way.

MR. CONYBEARE: Then I will not refer to it. I shall have an opportunity hereafter, I presume, of discussing it at length. I have only been anxious to contrast the two proposals. That of the hon. and learned Member is simple, and might be settled in a few minutes, whereas the exceedingly complicated and expensive unrepresentative machinery proposed by the right hon. Gentleman amounts merely to this—that, as usual, the Government are offering the labourers of this country something with one hand and taking it away with the other. The labourers have asked for a loaf, and Her Majesty's Government are presenting them with a stone. That is about what the whole matter comes to. I will only say, in conclusion, with regard to the hon. and learned Member's proposal, without pledging myself to any conclusive opinion, that it would work out satisfactorily in all its details; that, as it has been presented to the Committee, it deserves consideration; and I think it would only be gracious and politic on the part of Her Majesty's Government to afford this rival scheme some opportunity of proving whether it is a better scheme than theirs or not. If the Government prefer to reject any rival proposal of this kind, in my opinion, they will not be indicating the sincerity of their desire to do everything in their power to benefit the agricultural labourer.

MR. JESSE COLLINGS: I hope my hon. and learned Friend will withdraw his Amendment. As one reason for doing so, I would point out that the principle of the scheme proposed by the Government is the compulsory acquisition of land; and no Government, present or future, would be allowed to entrust that power to such a society as that contemplated by my hon. and learned Friend.

MR. STAVELEY HILL: My hon. Friend says that the essence of the Bill is the compulsory purchase of land. I entirely agree with him, and that is the very reason why I have proposed a scheme by which the compulsion is to be enforced with the least possible difficulty. I have shown how the Local Board can approach the Local Government Board, and how they can put the Chief Registrar in motion by three steps instead of something like 15, and how the process of compulsion may be readily brought about. I shall certainly feel it my duty to go to a Division.

MR. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): I have listened to the speech of the hon. and learned Gentleman with astonishment and surprise. I did not expect to hear such an extraordinary proposition coming from the Benches opposite. The hon. and learned Member actually proposes, in the first place, to allow to be set up a voluntarily constituted authority, with compulsory powers for the acquisition of land, and, in the second place, to save it from the consequences of its own mismanagement at the expense of the general community. I have heard over and over again eloquent speeches against the growing tendency to increase the rates, and in favour of increased protection for the ratepayers; but here the hon. and learned Member proposes to put the purse of the ratepayers at the mercy of a voluntarily constituted society consisting of seven labourers who want to have allotments. A more extraordinary proposal has never been made to the House of Commons, and I cannot think that it is worthy of any lengthened discussion.

MR. STAVELEY HILL: May I be allowed to explain that I have not given these societies an opportunity of coming on the rates for a single penny? The whole expense would fall upon the societies themselves.

MR. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN: I am very much obliged to the hon. and learned Gentleman for his further explanation; but I venture to say that in that case the Bill would not be worth the paper on which it is written, because the principle of the Bill is that the community shall provide these allotments, and if any loss accrues in carrying out the object sought to be accomplished, that loss should fall on the ratepayers. Unless we can bring in the responsibility of the community, we may as well give up all idea of dealing with the subject. Does the hon. and learned Gentleman mean to tell the Committee that it would be possible for a self-constituted society of seven labourers to undertake the duty of buying land and of providing allotments, and to bear the loss which may accrue? It must be an extraordinary body of labourers who are in a position to become capitalists to this extent, and to undertake a great work of this kind. As the proposal has been developed by the hon. and learned Gentleman's explanations, it appears more and more ridiculous and absurd than it was at the first glance. I do not intend to enter into a review of the speech of the hon. Member for the Camborne Division of Cornwall (Mr. Conybeare). Unless I am mistaken, the constituency of the hon. Member is not particularly interested in acquiring allotments. Therefore, it was perfectly safe for the hon. Member to discuss the question at great length, though, by so doing, he was putting the Bill in danger. But I would make an appeal to hon. Members behind him. No one of any Parliamentary experience can doubt, especially after the announcement made by the Government this afternoon, that the life of the Bill hangs by a thread; and, consequently, my hon. Friends behind me who have shown an interest in the subject for many years have to consider whether, in their opinion, it is worth while and desirable to secure what they will secure by the Bill—namely, the formal acceptance of the principle that compulsory powers for acquiring land shall be given to the Local Authorities, upon whom should be thrown the responsibility of providing these much-needed allotments. I am aware that some of my hon. Friends behind me take exception, and reasonable exception, to many of the provisions of the Bill; but they should remember that the measure is of necessity an imperfect one, because no perfect measure can possibly be introduced until we have a complete system of local government. That is an additional disadvantage we undergo in entering into this discussion now, because we have no complete system of local government before us. I would, however, ask my hon. Friends to consider carefully and seriously whether it is not worth their while, while waiting for a better system of local government, to accept a Bill of this kind, which puts upon record in statutory form the principle of the compulsory purchase of land for allotments, for which I and they have so long contended. Whatever may be the defects of the Bill, and while we may well try to introduce some Amendments into it, is it not worth while to get this acknowledgment from both sides of the House and place it on the Statute Book? I feel that I am justified in taking that view, after the speech of my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) on the second reading of the Bill. If my hon. Friends behind me agree in that view, I trust that they will make some sacrifice of their individual opinions at this period of the Session, and that while they will not feel themselves precluded from moving many of the numerous Amendments of which they have given Notice, they will, having regard to the circumstances of the time, feel that they are doing wisely, and are acting in the interests of the labourers, if they confine the discussion upon those Amendments within reasonable limits, and address their observations to the more important of the Amendments only.

Mr. COBB: I have no doubt that we all desire to do what we can to improve the Bill in a perfectly *bonâ fide* way, and I can assure the President of the Local Government Board that every remark I made was made with that object and no other. I suggested that it was necessary to postpone the discussion not with any object of killing the Bill, but of enabling the Committee to comprehend the nature of the Amendments proposed to be introduced by the Government. So far as I understand the meaning of the hon. and learned Gentleman opposite, he has proposed his scheme as an addition to, and not in substitution of, the plan of the Government. If I am wrong in that matter, I will not say a word further about it. [Mr. Staveley Hill assented.] As my hon. and learned Friend nods, I think I may take it that that is so. I certainly cannot see myself what harm there can be in giving to friendly societies the power of acquiring land if their members wish to have it, and of allotting it among their members, if they do not possess that power already. I should like, however, to point out one fact to my hon. and learned Friend, although he is much more likely to be right than I am. I have looked through the Friendly Societies Act to-day, having had no opportunity of doing so before, because the Amendment of the hon. and learned Gentleman was not printed until this morning, and on looking through that Act I do not find any restriction to one acre of land except in one case, and that is in the case of benevolent societies. If I am right in that, I think the hon. and learned Member will see that these benevolent societies will include very few of the societies which will come in under this Bill. I believe that at this moment friendly societies have absolute power to purchase any amount of land which their members may authorize them to purchase. [Mr. Staveley Hill: No.] If the Amendment of my hon. and learned Friend means this—that friendly societies are to be given power, by the Amendment which he proposes, to charge and mortgage the rates, I will certainly, under no circumstances, support him; but if he simply means to correct a defect in the Friendly Societies Act, then I shall vote for the Amendment.

Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): I think my hon. Friend behind me has entirely misinterpreted the proposal of my hon. and learned Friend, which is, as I view it, to substitute his scheme for that of the Government. It would make the scheme a totally different one *in toto* from the very beginning, and for my part I cannot accept the Amendment in that sense. I believe that it would be wholly unworkable; and I believe, further, that the House would never consent for a moment to give the compulsory power for the purchase of allotments to voluntary societies in the nature of friendly societies. If such a power is to be given at all—and I should strongly support it—it can only be given to Local Authorities. I am in favour of the Bill itself. There may be some clauses in it which are not altogether as workable as we may wish, and possibly we may not be able, in the short time we have before us, to make them as workable as we might like But I would appeal to my hon. Friends near me to adopt the advice of my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham, and endeavour to pass the Bill in as short a time and as well as we can, in order that we may have on the Statute Book the principle of compulsion, which I believe to be a most valuable and desirable one. I have had some experience of dealing with the allotment question, because I acted as Chairman of the Committee upon the Bill of the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham (Mr. Jesse Collings), which gave power to charity trustees to deal with that question, and I know from experience how difficult the details of such a Bill are. I am not very sanguine; but I think we may be able to get rid of all the difficulties which surround this measure. At all events, let us do all we can in the time before us, and if we do not succeed to the extent of our desires, it may be possible for us, in a future Session, to amend the measure. I have stated that the most important principle of the Bill is the power of compulsory purchase; but I do not believe that the power of compulsory purchase will often have to be exercised, although it will operate as an effective motive power in many parishes throughout the country in inducing landowners to let their land for allotments. When a landowner feels disinclined to do his duty of his own free will under the provisions of this measure, the Local Authority will have the power of compulsory purchase; and, therefore, I think the landowners will be instigated to go far beyond what they have done in the past. In that way, I believe, it is highly probable that the Local Authority will be able to purchase by agreement, instead of putting the compulsory powers in force; and the landowners, knowing that there are compulsory powers, will be much more ready in the future to allow their land to be taken for this purpose. As I have said, these compulsory powers will be of the greatest value as the motive power; but they will not, in my opinion, be frequently put in force. I sincerely trust that the Bill may pass, and I cordially welcome the proposals hon. which have been made by the right Gentleman opposite the President of the Local Government Board to-day, especially the one for reviving the old commons of England, and enabling the Local Authority to purchase them.

The CHAIRMAN: I must point out to the right hon. Gentleman that he is going very far beyond the Question before the Committee.

Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE: The whole scheme was opened out by the hon. and learned Gentleman opposite. I have no wish, however, to do anything that is out of Order, and I will only say that I cordially welcome the proposals of the Government, and when they are reached I shall be prepared to state my reasons for doing so.

Mr. H. T. DAVENPORT (Staffordshire, Leek): I should like to remind the Committee of a point which seems to have been forgotten—namely, that the voluntary principle has worked admirably with regard to the building societies which have been established under the Building Societies Act, enabling their members to provide themselves with houses. That is a much more difficult and expensive process than the mere purchase of land for allotments. The object of the hon. and learned Member is not to do away with the compulsory machinery provided by the Bill, but to afford an opportunity for the formation of societies under the Friendly Societies Act for the purchase and retail of allotments. I believe that might be easily carried out on the voluntary principle, and I think with the same success, that has attended the operations of the building societies which have been established in a large number of places for the purpose of providing houses for the working classes. I will not detain the Committee by explaining the operation of these societies; but if their working has been successful in the case of houses, I am sure it would be quite as sucessful in providing allotment gardens for labourers.

Mr. WINTERBOTHAM (Gloucester, Cirencester): I would appeal to the hon. and learned Member opposite to withdraw his Amendment and let us get on with the important clauses we have before us. If the hon. and learned Member really wants to give power to friendly societies to serve the interests of the poor by acquiring land by free contract, there can be no objection to that; but it will have to be done by a different Bill from that we are now considering. The Committee will know very well that I do not approve of the Board of Guardians being the authority to put the provisions of this Bill into operation; but I realize that no good will be effected by raising that question now, seeing that it would alter the Bill altogether, and make it a different measure. When we have Local Representative Boards established we shall have another and a better authority, either than Boards of Guardians or *ex officio* authorities. I therefore hope that the hon. and learned Gentleman will withdraw the Amendment, because I do not believe that support will be given to it in any part of the Committee. It proposes to entrust to a voluntary body the power of mortgaging the rates—of exercising compulsory powers for the purchase of land.

Mr. STAVELEY HILL: I am anxious that it should be clearly understood that my proposal would not throw a single penny upon the rates, but would simply enable voluntary bodies, such as the friendly societies spoken of by my hon. Friend the Member for the Leek Division of Staffordshire (Mr. H. T. Davenport)—namely, building societies—to acquire land suitable for labourers' allotments. All they would have to do would be to apply to the Chief Registrar, and if he gave his permission they would then apply to the Treasury and obtain the land they require. My object is to secure that in purchasing by agreement—in which case the provisions of the Friendly Societies Act are ready at hand—land shall be obtained as cheaply and as readily as possible, and I have no doubt that the provisions of the Friendly Societies Act would be fairly exercised. Of course, I am in the hands of the Committee; but I would venture to express a hope that my proposal will have the support of the Committee.

Sir WALTER FOSTER (Derby, Ilkeston): Hon. Members who profess to desire that allotments of land shall be granted upon the voluntary principle have certainly not come to the aid of the hon. and learned Member for Staffordshire. Their principle has always been that the necessary allotments should be provided by voluntary action, and not by Public Bodies at the public risk. The hon. and learned Gentleman has submitted a scheme by which that object may be carried out, and persons may be able to invest their own money in order to satisfy a public need. Therefore, I think that the proposal of the hon. and learned Gentleman has not been treated fairly in this discussion. The hon. and learned Gentleman fully recognizes the principle of compulsion by giving to voluntary societies compulsory powers for acquiring land for a definite purpose of public necessity, and on that ground I think the proposal should have received more sympathy than has been exhibited towards it in the course of this debate. I prefer the scheme of the hon. and learned Gentleman in some respects to that of the President of the Local Government Board, and for this reason—that it is likely to be more expeditious, and to bring about the satisfaction of this want more rapidly. The scheme of the right hon. Gentleman is calculated to lead to a long and troublesome delay, while that of the hon. and learned Gentleman offers a much more speedy method of satisfying the wants of the people. Moreover, it is an additional method of encouraging allotments, and for carrying out the object which hon. Members opposite profess to have at heart. If we are to have compulsory powers at all, I think there ought to be an expeditious mode of putting them into operation. The more effectual the compulsory powers are made, the more general will be the voluntary action on the part of the landowners to prevent them from being put into operation.

Question put.

The Committee *divided:*—Ayes 78; Noes 200: Majority 122.—(Div. List, No. 405.)

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): Before this clause is passed I want to ask the very elementary question which I put to the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board yesterday, but failed to get an answer—namely, what is an allotment? I have made this inquiry of a good many persons who are great authorities on the subject; but I have not been able to get an answer from any of them. The right hon. Gentleman referred me to *Johnson's Dictionary.* Well, I consulted that dictionary, and this is what I found there—" 'Allotment,' that which is allotted to anyone."

THE CHAIRMAN: The question is not appropriate to Clause 1. It should be raised on Clause 14 as a definition.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: Clause 1 embodies the short title of the Bill—"This Act may be cited as the Allotments Act, 1887."

Clause *agreed to.*

Clause 2 (Duty of Sanitary Authority to acquire land for allotments).

MR. RITCHIE: The first Amendment upon this clause is in the name of the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham (Mr. Jesse Collings). I hope he will excuse me for intervening, at this moment, in connection with the Amendments on the Paper; but I wish to point out that there is an Amendment on the Paper which in principle the Government are prepared to accept, and which stands in the name of my right hon. Friend the Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire (Mr. Chaplin). I believe that that Amendment will fairly carry out the intention of my hon. Friend opposite, and with the permission of the Committee I will move it. It is as follows:—In line 6, to leave out the words, "Where it appears to the satisfaction of the sanitary authority of any urban or rural district," in order to substitute these words—

> "On a representation in writing to the sanitary authority of any urban or rural district by any six registered Parliamentary electors resident, in the case of an urban district, in that district, and, in the case of a rural district, in some parish in that district, that the circumstances of the urban district or parish are such that it is the duty of the sanitary authority to take proceedings under this Act therein, the sanitary authority shall take such representation into consideration. If the sanitary authority of any urban or rural district are of opinion, either after inquiry made in consequence of such representation or otherwise, that there is a considerable demand for allotments, and that it would be to the public advantage to meet such demand, the sanitary authority shall acquire land adequate to provide allotments, and shall let the land to persons in the district desiring to take it."

The Amendment, while setting up the principle of representation, leaves the initiation in the hands of the Local Authority itself. It would be easy to get this representation made in a rural district, where the Sanitary Authority may feel it its duty to put it in operation. There is one slight difference between this proposal and that of the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division. The hon. Member proposes that the application should be made by 10 or more persons to the Sanitary Authority, whereas this proposal is that it should be made by six registered Parliamentary electors. The hon. Member further provides that it shall be sufficient for the persons applying to be householders in any urban or rural district, which would mean that the application may come from seven or eight districts in a Union. That is clearly not what the hon. Member means. The Amendment of the right hon. Member for Sleaford makes it incumbent that the representation shall come from six registered Parliamentary electors of the parish where the allotments are required, and it does not take from the Sanitary Authority the power of initiation, which I think ought to remain in their hands, even although the representation does not come from them.

Amendment proposed,

In page 1, line 6, to leave out from the word "where," to the word "district," in line 7, in order to insert the words "on a representation in writing to the sanitary authority of any urban or rural district by any six registered Parliamentary electors resident, in the case of an urban district, in that district, and, in the case of a rural district, in some parish in that district, that the circumstances of the urban district or parish are such that it is the duty of the sanitary authority to take proceedings under this Act therein, the sanitary authority shall take such representation into consideration.

"If the sanitary authority of any urban or rural district are of opinion either after inquiry made in consequence of such representation or otherwise that there is a considerable demand for allotments, and that it would be to the public advantage to meet such demand, the sanitary authority shall acquire land adequate to provide allotments, and shall let the land to persons in the district desiring to take it."—(*Mr. Ritchie.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

MR. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): May I ask if the right hon. Member is strictly in order in moving an Amendment which stands lower down on the Paper than another on the same subject in the name of the hon. Member for Bordesley, and to which I have an Amendment?

THE CHAIRMAN: That is not what the right hon. Gentleman is doing. The right hon. Gentleman, having charge of the Bill, has precedence in moving Amendments, and he is now proposing an Amendment on the same point as that which is dealt with by the Amendment of the hon. Member for Bordesley —namely, to leave out certain words, and to substitute a different kind of representation. He proposes to leave out the words "where it appears to the satisfaction of the sanitary authority of any urban or rural district," in order to substitute the words which I have already put. The Question is "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

MR. CHANNING: It strikes me that the Amendment as it stands would make it very difficult for such a representation to be made to the authority in a rural district.

MR. RITCHIE: May I be allowed to explain? The Amendment, as I have amended it, makes it the duty of the Sanitary Authority to move "on a representation being made to it," by a certain number of electors in any part of the district, and then it goes on to say that the representation, if you have an urban district, may come from any part of the urban district, and may come from two or three parishes, whereas if it is made by a rural district it must come from a parish in the district."

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby): I should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman what is the meaning of introducing the qualification of "registered Parliamentary electors?" What we are generally accustomed to in a Bill of this sort affecting local government is not Parliamentary electors, but either "householders" or "ratepayers." That is the ordinary machinery we are used to, and I do not understand why in this case "registered Parliamentary electors" are substituted. For instance, this definition would exclude a class of persons who are quite as entitled as any others in a rural district or an urban district to representation, as, for example, a widow woman with a family. Why should not she apply for an allotment? A widow woman may be a householder with a family of grown-up children and may desire an allotment, and would probably have children who would work the allotment or any grazing pasturage which may be given to her. Why, then, introduce a qualification which will exclude persons of that kind? It seems to me that the proper term to use is "householder" or "ratepayer," or "inhabitant." It is certainly quite new to introduce "registered Parliamentary electors," and it seems to me not to be a proper definition to put in the clause.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER) (Isle of Wight): May I point out that a very large number of persons do not pay their own rates, but the landlord pays them for them? Therefore, if we substitute "ratepayers," we should very much narrow the clause, because many labourers are not ratepayers. Nor do I think the clause would be enlarged by inserting the word "inhabitant." It is desirable that there should be a ready means of finding out whether the persons making the representation are resident, and in that respect "registered Parliamentary electors" comply with every requirement. Our sole object is to introduce a comprehensive expression, so that we may get at the very class of persons the right hon. Gentleman desires to include. With regard to women, there is a provision later on in reference to their holding allotments; but if it is desired to introduce special words, something of the kind may be added. I would venture, however, to point out that the scope of the clause, as it stands, is as wide as can be desired.

MR. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): The Amendment which has been moved by the President of the Local Government Board is, no doubt, an improvement on that of my hon. Friend the Member for Bordesley (Mr. Jesse Collings). I had myself placed an Amendment on the Paper to the Amendment of my hon. Friend; and if I had been able to move it now, I should have pointed out that the Amendment of the hon. Member for Bordesley necessitates an inquiry in every case, which the present Amendment does not; but, although I admit that the Amendment of the Government is an improvement on that of the hon. Member for Bordesley, I cannot accept it as it has been moved, and for this reason—that it seems to leave the labourers and those who apply for allotments pretty much in the position they were in before. They are only allowed to knock at the door, and are left entirely at the discretion of the Sanitary Authority. They make a representation, and unless the Sanitary Authorities are satisfied, in their own opinion, that the representation is reasonable, they have the opportunity of rejecting it. The Amendment which I propose to move, and which I believe I shall be in Order in moving when this Amendment becomes a substantive Motion, is as follows:—

> "A representation being made in writing by ten or more registered electors of any urban or rural district that they or other inhabitants of full age of such district are desirous of obtaining, but cannot obtain on reasonable terms, allotments, and that there is land suitable and available for allotments within such district, or within a reasonable distance thereof, the sanitary authority shall hold, or cause to be held, a public inquiry within such district, and unless at such public inquiry the allegations contained in such representation are proved to be without foundation, or if."

That Amendment is already on the Paper, and I shall move it subject to those alterations of wording which may be necessary in order to append it to the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford. In the discussion which took place on the second reading of the Bill, that right hon. Gentleman expressed himself strongly on the point. He wished to give a real and effective initiative in the matter, and he went so far as to complain that he doubted very much whether the Guardians would listen to any representation that was made by labourers who might require allotments; and I understood him to say that he would give an appeal to the Quarter Sessions in order to enable the labourers to enforce the action of the Sanitary Authority. I would, therefore, point out that if the right hon. Gentleman wishes to be consistent, he will support the Amendment I propose to move, because at the close of the Amendment I place the matter on this footing—

> "Unless at such public inquiry the allegations contained in such representation are proved to be without foundation;"

and I then use the words "or if," leaving the action of the Sanitary Authority entirely free. I also hope my hon. Friend the Member for Bordesley will support this view of the case, because no one has expressed, as strongly as he has, his desire to make this a real Bill—to empower the labourers to acquire these allotments. All I wish is that the provisions of the measure shall not be evaded by any authority hereafter; and no two hon. Members have insisted more strongly on that point than the right hon. Member for West Birmingham and the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I beg to move to amend the Amendment, by leaving out the words "registered Parliamentary electors," in order to insert "residents."

THE CHAIRMAN: It is not yet possible to amend the Amendment.

MR. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): As far as I am individually concerned, I have no objection whatever to accept the proposition of the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down; but I do not think it makes any real difference in the effect of the Amendment which the Committee are now discussing. In either case it must be a matter of opinion. I have provided that—

"If the sanitary authority are of opinion, either in consequence of the representation made to them or otherwise, that they are to proceed to act in the matter."

The hon. Member provides by his Amendment that—

"Unless at such public inquiry the allegations contained in such representation are proved to be without foundation,"

they are to proceed. Whether the representation is proved to be without foundation or not is a matter of opinion to be decided by the Sanitary Authority. As far as I am concerned, I am only anxious to make the clause effective, and to induce the Sanitary Authority to act in all circumstances where there is reasonable ground for so doing. If the Committee prefer the Amendment with the addition suggested by the hon. Gentleman opposite I have no objection.

Mr. JESSE COLLINGS: I would remind my hon. Friend the Member for East Northampton (Mr. Channing) that this clause is really moved for the purpose of putting the machinery in motion. We are not dealing with the question of who shall have allotments, or anything of that kind; but we are simply seeking to provide that the Bill shall not become a dead letter. I think there is very little to choose between the two Amendments. The reason why I prefer the present one to my own is that it substitutes six applicants for 10, which is an advantage. The effect will be that in any district, whether it has an Urban Authority or a Rural Authority, six persons making a representation in writing will be able to put the authority in motion. I do not think it worth while to take up the time of the Committee on this particular point, which is simply to set the authority in motion. As I have said, I think the Amendment before the Committee will secure that object equally with mine, and, perhaps, rather better. I therefore trust that the Committee will accept it and allow us to get on.

Mr. COBB: The Amendment of the right hon. Member for Sleaford provides that the inquiry should be made by the Local Authority, whereas that of the hon. Member for East Northampton provides that "there shall be a public inquiry," which is, in my opinion, much better, because we all know the effect which a public meeting may produce on the action of the Local Authority. The hon. Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham says that the only object of this clause is to put the machinery in motion; but we have no confidence in the machinery being put in operation at all, unless some pressure is brought to bear on the Local Authority. Therefore, I think the Amendment of my hon. Friend is better than the other one, and I hope it will be accepted.

Mr. CONYBEARE: I should like to know the exact position in which the Committee is placed. Is this Amendment to be passed *en bloc* or not?

The CHAIRMAN: The Question before the Committee is to strike out the words "where it appears to the satisfaction of the sanitary authority of any urban or rural district," in order to insert the words which have been proposed by the President of the Local Government Board.

Question, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause," put, and *negatived.*

Question proposed,

"That the words 'on a representation in writing to the sanitary authority of any urban or rural district by any six registered Parliamentary electors resident, in the case of an urban district, in that district, and, in the case of a rural district, in some parish in that district, that the circumstances of the urban district or parish are such that it is the duty of the sanitary authority to take proceedings under this Act therein, the sanitary authority shall take such representation into consideration.

If the sanitary authority of any urban or rural district are of opinion, either after inquiry made in consequence of such representation or otherwise' be there inserted."

Mr. CHANNING: I rise now to move that all the words in the Motion before the Committee after the words "in writing" be omitted, and that the words of my Amendment be substituted. As far as I am concerned, I have no partiality for the number "10." I took that number from the Bill which was recently before the House of Lords; but if the Committee prefer six, it is quite indifferent to me.

The CHAIRMAN: I would suggest that the words in the Amendment may be retained down to the words "rural district," and then go on with the words "that they or other inhabitants of full age," &c.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I rise to Order. I think the Amendment I intend to propose comes before this. My Amendment is to omit the words "registered Parliamentary electors resident," in line 2, and to insert "residents."

Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment, to leave out the words "registered Parliamentary electors," in order to insert the words "persons of full age."—(*Mr. Bradlaugh.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'registered Parliamentary electors' stand part of the proposed Amendment."

MR. STAVELEY HILL: I would suggest "persons of full age resident." Would that meet the wishes of the hon. Member for Northampton?

MR. BRADLAUGH: Certainly; I accept that alteration.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Amendment proposed to proposed Amendment, to leave out the words "registered Parliamentary electors resident," in order to insert the words "persons of full age resident."—(*Mr. Staveley Hill.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'resident Parliamentary electors resident' stand part of the Clause."

MR. RITCHIE: There is an obvious objection to the proposal of the hon. Gentleman—namely, that it will lead to difficulties, because it is not always possible to tell what constitutes "resident." It seems to me that the words proposed by the Government are words as wide as can be expected by anybody, and they include all who can have any claim to speak on behalf of the community among whom they live. We have not taken these words with any view of restriction, but in order to embrace as large a number of persons as possible. We take persons who have a recognized status, being upon the electoral roll, and we do not raise the question of whether a person is a resident or not.

MR. CONYBEARE: I am satisfied that the Government have not introduced the expression with the view of unduly restricting the number of persons who may be interested in making the representation; but I will place before the Committee one single fact which, I think, will convince them that, whether that is the object or not, it will certainly have that result. Everybody will admit that persons are only placed on a Parliamentary Register if they have paid by a certain date in the year the poor rate that became due in the month of January. I happen to know that among my constituents—and notwithstanding the taunt to which I have been subjected by the right hon. Member for West Birmingham, I have a perfect right to speak on this subject, and I shall do so in the interests of my constituents—I happen to know that many of my constituents in the town of Camborne have been disqualified from being on the Register owing to the non-payment of their poor rates in the month of July. It is perfectly obvious that the non-payment of a few pence by a particular date is an absurdity of our Parliamentary Law, if it is to disqualify a man from being an elector. Certainly, in regard to this Bill, it ought not to disqualify people from having a voice in the matter. They may have paid the first half of the poor rate; but owing to neglect or forgetfulness, or some other cause, they may have omitted to pay the rest. They may have paid the highway rate, the school rate, and all the other rates, except the poor rate which was due in January; but if, from some accident, they have not paid that rate, they are at once disqualified from being on the Register. I therefore think it would be an absurdity to keep these words in.

MR. SEALE-HAYNE (Devon, Ashburton): The Amendment which has been proposed is similar to one which I have on the Paper. I therefore desire to say a word to explain why I think the term "residents" would be much better in a country district than "householders" or "ratepayers." Those who will be most likely to desire to put this Act into force are the agricultural labourers; and in the country districts, as a rule, the agricultural labourers are not ratepayers, and very often are not Parliamentary electors. If, therefore, we desire to confer upon the agricultural labourers the means of moving the Local Authority to put this Act in operation, the only word which will include local labourers is the word "residents." I therefore support the Amendment.

MR. F. S. POWELL (Wigan): I would make an appeal to the Committee to accept the words as they stand in the

Amendment of my right hon. Friend, and to proceed with the Bill. In these days of widely extended franchise, if the labourers desire allotments, they will be easily able to make their wishes known. I would point out that this is strictly a Bill of detail, and it is impossible to say what number of details might not be put into the measure in a different form. If, however, we are to discuss every possibility on every Amendment in detail, I am afraid it will be impossible that the Bill can become law. The measure has been introduced by the Government in good faith, and I hope the Committee will assist them in carrying it forward.

Mr. CONYBEARE: May I ask whether the remarks of the hon. Member are pertinent to the Question, which is whether "Parliamentary electors" shall be retained in the Amendment?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. Gentleman is urging expedition.

Mr. F. S. POWELL: I was simply proceeding to remark that the Bill had been introduced into the House with a good object, and that if the main end and aim of it meet the wishes of the Committee—and we are desirous of seeing it become law—we ought to accept its provisions as far as possible, and avoid unnecessary delay.

Viscount EBRINGTON (Devon, Tavistock): I think that the words "resident electors or ratepayers" would meet the case.

Mr. RITCHIE: I am quite ready to accept that suggestion.

Mr. BRADLAUGH: Scarcely any of the people I was thinking of would be ratepayers.

Viscount EBRINGTON: I think an Amendment to that effect would go a considerable way towards meeting the difficulty, and for this reason—that these persons are not bound to make the representation as to their wishes themselves; and I do not think the persons who are contemplated by the hon. Member would have any great difficulty in finding the requisite number of ratepayers to make a representation on their behalf. Certainly, an extension of this power to the ratepayers would enlarge the operation of the clause.

Viscount WOLMER (Hants, Petersfield): I would suggest to the hon. Member for Northampton that he would get over the difficulty by saying "persons of full age resident for at least 12 months."

Mr. STANSFELD: The argument of the right hon. Gentleman was that the use of the term "residents" might lead to considerable confusion. Let me point out to him that there would be no practical confusion, because even if the statement addressed to the Local Authority should not be sufficiently signed or sufficiently definite in accordance with the terms of this measure, that would not necessarily destroy the validity of the application, because the authority has power, after an inquiry has been made, of doing certain things in consequence of such representation, or otherwise. Therefore, no confusion can arise; and I think it is most desirable, with a view to the effect on public opinion, that no person should be excluded from the right of making a representation.

Sir RICHARD WEBSTER: May I point out that there are practical objections to the use of this word? We only want to get as simple a representation as possible. These six persons would represent a much larger body, and we want a qualification. Nobody suggests that the phrase "registered Parliamentary electors" is not a large qualification; but it is suggested that something else might be better. If we insert the words "persons of full age resident," we at once raise difficult questions, which have often got us into trouble in the Courts of Law as to what constitutes "residents." By putting in "six registered Parliamentary electors," we include a large body of persons, and at once obtain persons who have a recognized status. If residence is fixed upon, it is clear that persons who are only temporary residents would not be included, nor would they be entitled to speak on behalf of other persons who are resident in a parish or an urban district. Six electors would really be representative of the whole body; and if there are not six who would come forward, there could not be much demand for allotments.

Mr. BRADLAUGH: I have no objection to accept the words "resident for 12 months;" but I do not think the qualification ought to be limited to "registered Parliamentary electors."

Mr. COBB: Everyone who has had anything to do with an agricultural constituency knows that when arrangements are being made for registration, it is constantly asked, "Why is not So-and-So on the Register?" and the general answer is, "Oh, he is not married." Therefore, there will be a large number of men who are much interested in having a voice in putting this Act in operation who will not be registered electors.

Mr. JESSE COLLINGS: I think that, with the addition which has been accepted by the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh), we ought to be able to get over the difficulty. Of course, there is no desire that persons who may be living in a district for a week or two should have the right of setting the whole of this machinery in motion; but with the safeguard the hon. Member for Northampton has accepted of 12 months' residence, I think the Amendment would be an improvement upon the proposal of the Government. There are certainly many men who are qualified to be on the Parliamentary Register who are not upon it. In small parishes it might be extremely difficult to get six of the farmers to make a representation in favour of allotments for the agricultural labourers, and yet they might be the only persons on the Parliamentary Register.

Question put.

The Committee *divided:*—Ayes 166; Noes 112: Majority 54.—(Div. List, No. 406.) [6.50 p.m.]

Amendment made to the Amendment.

Amendment proposed to the said proposed Amendment,

To leave out from the word "district," in line 4, to end of the Amendment, in order to insert the words "that the circumstances that they or other inhabitants of full age of such district are desirous of obtaining, but cannot obtain on reasonable terms, allotments, and that there is land suitable and available for allotments within such district, or within a reasonable distance thereof, the sanitary authority shall hold, or cause to be held, a public inquiry within such district, and unless at such public inquiry the allegations contained in such representation are proved to be without foundation or if."—(*Mr. Channing.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the proposed Amendment."

The PRESIDENT of the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. Ritchie) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I regret that I cannot accept the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman opposite. An application could not be made to the Sanitary Authority, and the inquiry could not be held, without a large amount of trouble and expense; and if, as might very well be, the Sanitary Authority after holding the inquiry were to decide that there was no ground for the application, all the expense and friction involved would have been incurred in vain. But there is another objection—namely, that without the hon. Member's words, the authorities might, on the representation made to them, be satisfied that the demand was *bona fide*, and might proceed to put the Act in force; but the proposal of the hon. Gentleman would necessitate a public inquiry being held under all circumstances, and this, as I have shown, might do harm, and would be always accompanied by a large amount of friction and expense. I hope, therefore, the hon. Gentleman will not think it necessary to press this Amendment on the Committee.

Mr. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): I think the right hon. Gentleman has missed the point of my Amendment. If the Sanitary Authority has reason to doubt the *bona fides* of the representation made to them, they will, of course, hold a public inquiry; but otherwise they will not hold an inquiry, and it is left perfectly free to them also to act on their own opinion, without any representation being made to them.

Question put.

The Committee *divided:*—Ayes 164; Noes 80: Majority 84.—(Div. List, No. 407.) [7.5 p.m.]

Proposed Amendment, as amended, put, and *agreed to.*

Mr. CHANNING: I object to the words "a considerable demand." I think needless difficulties and discussions might arise in determining what is a "considerable" demand.

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 7, leave out the words "any considerable," and insert, "a."—(*Mr. Channing.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

Mr. RITCHIE: I think the hon. Member will see that no Local Authority would be justified in putting into operation the machinery of the Bill unless there was reason to believe that a considerable number of people desired to avail themselves of the Act. If, however, the word "considerable" is thought by the Committee to be too wide, I suggest that we might substitute for it "sufficient."

Sir WALTER FOSTER (Derby, Ilkeston): I wish that the Government, in drawing up this Bill, had abstained from the use of adjectives, because they are terms the meaning of which may be interpreted variously by different persons, and are, therefore, not likely to facilitate the carrying out of the provisions of the Bill. If the right hon. Gentleman will specify the number of 10 or 20 persons, then I think there will be much less difficulty, because, as the Bill now stands, one person might interpret the word "considerable" to mean 10 persons, and another 50. That is the difficulty which we desire to avoid. We have no great confidence in the authority which is to carry out this Bill, and we want to see it specified that the authority shall be bound to act when a certain number of labourers agree together to ask that the Act may be put in operation.

Mr. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley): We should remember, in the first place, that the authority named in the Bill is only a temporary one, and that when the County Authority is created the matter will rest with them. Under the Amendment of the hon. Member it might be that only two persons would ask for the Bill to be put in operation. I hope, therefore, that my hon. Friend will accept the compromise offered by the right hon. Gentleman.

Mr. STAVELEY HILL (Staffordshire, Kingswinsford): I cannot say that the word "sufficient" carries any more idea to my mind than the word "considerable," and therefore think it an unsuitable phrase. Would not my right hon. Friend find it much better to insert such words as "where there is a demand for," say, "not less than five acres?" We all know that the quantities taken for gardens vary generally from 12 to 15 rods, and therefore five acres would give us space for about 25 persons. I venture to think that the word "considerable," and the word "sufficient" convey no clear idea, and I therefore hope the right hon. Gentleman will agree to my suggestion.

Mr RITCHIE: Hon. Members will recollect that we are dealing with an authority which is responsible for all action connected with local affairs and matters upon which the life and health of the people depend; and surely it is rather too much that the House of Commons should be so rigid in its instructions to the Local Authority as to define the actual number of acres to be applied for allotments. I would appeal to the Committee as to whether any one of the Amendments we have been discussing at such length is for one moment to be put in comparison with the passage of this Bill? The matters we have been discussing are of the most trivial import.

Mr. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby): I think the right hon. Gentleman has, by the remarks he has just made, shown his ignorance of the feeling of the working classes with regard to this question. These may seem minor questions to the right hon. Gentleman; but I can assure him that they are of large importance to the people in our villages. The hon. Member for Bordesley (Mr. Jesse Collings) says that it would be objectionable if two persons only were to make an application to the Sanitary Authority to put the machinery of the Bill in force. But why should not the Sanitary Authority, even in the case of one man, buy an acre of land or less and let the man have what he wants? This man's example might induce others to do the same. The whole difficulty of dealing with this Bill arises from one thing—namely, that the people have no confidence whatever in the authority who will have to put this Act in force. My hon. Friend said just now that this authority was only temporary. But my hon. Friend is mistaken in that; he will find that the County Authority will be no authority to put this Act in force, and I am of opinion that there is no prospective advantage to be hoped for from that body. For my part, I do not think it is necessary to have any such word here as "considerable" or "sufficient."

Mr. HENEAGE (Great Grimsby): The hon. Gentleman asks why we should object to one or two labourers having allotments. The real questions with regard to allotments is the price at which they can be obtained. Are you to get land which is exactly what you require, or are you to buy land and fence it round? Because if you have to fence it you will add to the price of the land considerably. If the Local Authorities find they can get a piece of land of the right size, then, I say, if there are only three applicants for allotments let them buy it; but do not compel them to buy a field or a portion of a field for three persons and then have to fence it round. I can assure hon. Members that if they wish the Bill to be effective they must pass it in such a form as will enable the labourers to get the land at a fair price.

MR. HALLEY STEWART (Lincolnshire, Spalding): I wish to point out that the Sanitary Authority will have it in their power to grant or refuse, and that I think is the reason why we should not bind down the authority by putting words in the clause of minimizing force.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): It is not exact on the part of the right hon. Gentleman to say that the Amendments which have been discussed this evening are trivial, nor is it true that they have been discussed at great length. I agree that this Amendment is one of a most important character; and it is not fair, because the Government have left the Bill to almost the last week in the Session, to say that we are interrupting the course of Business by exercising our proper right of discussion.

MR. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): May I point out to the right hon. Gentleman that there would be no important change made if he could see his way to leave out the word "considerable?" It would be then left to the Sanitary Authority to interpret the meaning of the clause.

MR. BRUNNER (Cheshire, Northwich): I would point out with regard to the Cheshire parishes that they are not such as are generally understood in this district. The parishes in Cheshire often consist of four or five farms, and I wish the right hon. Gentleman to bear this in mind in considering the effect of the words "sufficient demand," because otherwise we should be placed in a position of some difficulty in my county.

Question put, and *negatived.*

Question, "That the word 'a' be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

MR. FULLER (Wilts, Westbury): It seems to me not only that we should impress on the Sanitary Authority the necessity of considering the question of field allotments, but that they should also consider the question of extension of gardens attached to cottages. The field allotments have this object—namely, to save, to a considerable extent, the wages of the labourer, to enable him to occupy his leisure hours; and they are to be given also because it is considered that, to a great extent, they will prevent the influx of the rural population into towns. There is another object also in providing allotments for labourers, and that is the general sanitary improvement of cottages. I think the Committee will see that by an enlargement of the gardens attached to cottages they will very much widen the scope of the domestic comforts of the occupants, and that while providing for the health of the children who live in them there will be a better means of disposing of the refuse which is often to be found in cottages that are without gardens. Further, there are some persons among the class we are dealing with who require a more extensive area than they have for carrying out their calling—that is to say, an area which will enable them to erect a shed for a pony or pig, and to meet some other requirements. For these reasons I think we ought to give instructions to the Sanitary Authorities to consider the question of the extension of gardens attached to cottages. Hon. Members will have noticed that cottages in the country are often built on small patches of waste land, and that the cottagers have not sufficient garden ground; they will find also adjacent to these cottages large fields, notwithstanding which there are no means for the cottager to extend his garden. We should also bear in mind that enclosures have done much to prevent the extension of cottage gardens. In my opinion, landlords will very often be extremely glad to let off or sell land to the Sanitary Authorities for the purpose of providing gardens for cottages. My proposal is to enable the Local Sanitary Authority compulsorily to purchase strips of land, and to attach them to the cottages in the form of gardens. The Returns show that out of a total number of 2,000,000 labourers' cottages in England and Wales only 262,000 have gardens to the extent of an eighth of an acre attached to them. For these reasons I ask the Committee to agree to the Amendment I have placed on the Paper.

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 8, after "allotments," insert "or extension of gardens contiguous to houses."—(*Mr. Fuller.*)

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I beg to assure the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Westbury Division of Wilts that I entirely sympathize with the object he has in view, and I should be glad to see the labourers' cottages thoughout this country with an adequate portion of garden ground attached to them. But I would point out that this is a very different matter to that contemplated by the Bill, which is intended to provide field allotments and not gardens for agricultural labourers. There are several objections however to the proposal of the hon. Member. In the first place, although a tenant might desire addition to the garden ground of the cottage the owner of the cottage might have an objection to this. Again, one tenant may be perfectly able to pay 10*s.* or 15*s.* a-year for additional garden ground, but an incoming tenant might not be at all inclined to pay for this piece of land, and it might be that the Sanitary Authority having acquired the land would find afterwards that it was not required at all. There are, in short, many objections to extending the provisions of this Bill in the direction indicated, and as I have said the allotments which are here contemplated are field allotments, and not garden ground.

MR. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): I would draw attention to a fact which, perhaps, is not present in the mind of the hon. Member who has moved this Amendment—namely, that the Act of 1885, relating to the housing of the working classes, gives exactly the power which my hon. Friend wishes to see added to this Bill. I think my hon. Friend has drawn attention to a most interesting subject; but I hope he will not think it necessary to press his Amendment.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I think this discussion is an illustration of the inconvenience of entering upon a question of this kind without the Committee having laid before them a clear definition of the word "allotment." My hon. Friend who has moved this Amendment has extracted something like a definition from the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board, who says that the term "allotment" usually means a field allotment. It seems to me that the definition of the right hon. Gentleman takes away nine-tenths of the Bill. I believe that the Amendment of the hon. Member would be a valuable addition to the Act, inasmuch as gardens are infinitely more useful to the labourers than field allotments. Further, I believe there is no great demand by agricultural labourers for allotments; but for artizans it is, in my opinion, most desirable that they should have something in the nature of a garden attached to their houses. I was in hopes that the right hon. Gentleman would tell us that this Amendment was unnecessary, because the term "allotment" includes garden ground. An hon. Gentleman says, "so it does." I sincerely hope that it is so, but I must say that the arguments of my hon. Friend for introducing his Amendment were not answered by the right hon. Gentleman. We often see in the country long rows of desolate houses without gardens, and I think it is desirable, above all things, and reasonable as well, that the Sanitary Authority should be able to take a strip of land behind those cottages and cut it up for garden purposes. I do not understand the details of the allotment question as regards England, but I am of opinion that we should do well to accept the Amendment of the hon. Member for Westbury.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): I think if the word "allotment" is not to include extension of gardens, we shall lose a large portion of the value of this Bill. There are in all parts rows of houses with little pieces of garden ground attached that are quite insufficient for the purpose of growing garden stuff for the family of the cottager, and it is these small pieces of ground that the Amendment proposes to extend. It is of no use to offer the occupiers of these houses a piece of land a mile off, because, among other reasons, the cottager would have to get artificial manure for them. The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board says that it might be found that an incoming tenant would object to paying for the additional garden ground; but, on the other hand, there are people who would want the cottages because there was a reasonable patch of garden ground attached, and in that way the owner's property would be rendered more valuable. Therefore I think the difficulty raised by the right hon. Gentleman does not exist. It has been said that the Act of 1885 provides for the extension of garden ground in the case of labourers. It may be that there is such a provision; but, if so, it certainly does not work in Ireland, and in some parts of England, where there are undoubtedly many labourers' cottages which would be greatly improved by the extension of the gardens attached to them. I consider that this Act would be very workable in Ireland, and I hope not only that the hon. Member will press his Amendment, but that the clause which limits the Bill to England will be struck out.

Mr. HANDEL COSSHAM (Bristol, E.): I happen to be a large employer of labour, and I find that many of my men live a mile away from the works because they can get cottages with gardens. That, I think, shows the value which is attached by the working classes to the right of obtaining garden allotments. I think the Amendment of the hon. Member for the Westbury Division of Wilts (Mr. Fuller) would have a desirable effect; because the more men have the opportunity of cultivating flowers and vegetables, the more they are attached to the soil. Therefore, in my opinion, my hon. Friend has raised a valuable point, and I trust he will divide the Committee on his Amendment, which I should be glad if the Government would accept, even if they do so in a modified form.

Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): My hon. and gallant Friend the Member for North Galway (Colonel Nolan) has advocated that this Bill should be amended in the way which the hon. Member for Westbury proposes, and made to apply to Ireland. He says he would prefer the Bill to the Labourers' Act which now exists. That may be so; but, so far as the clause now before the Committee is concerned, I would certainly prefer that the matter should be fought out by Members on both sides of the House, which will show whether the Bill is an electioneering dodge or not. If we see that it will be of any use to the English working classes, then I think we may reasonably ask that it should be extended to Ireland.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby): I think the proposal of my hon. Friend the Member for the Westbury Division of Wilts (Mr. Fuller) is a very valuable one. Everyone who knows anything of rural life will be aware that there is a large class of people who could make use of garden allotments, but who could not use allotments of another kind. I rather object to the form of the Amendment, however, which deals with the extension of gardens, but does not include the creation of gardens. I recognize that there is some difficulty on the ground pointed out by the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) in the case of the owners of cottages. The hon. and gallant Member for North Galway (Colonel Nolan) has told us that the value of the property would be enhanced by the gardens being extended; but I doubt whether the owner of the cottage is entitled to have his property enhanced in value at the expense of the landowner. There are, however, many cases in which this difficulty would not arise; and although I do not think the best way of dealing with the matter would be to introduce the words proposed into this clause, I suggest that it should be stated in the interpretation clause that the term "allotment" includes land for gardens.

Mr. RITCHIE: I shall be very glad to consider the suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt), which, I think, is by far the most practical way of dealing with this matter. We have no wish to prevent what is sought to be done, and I will take care that the right hon. Gentleman's suggestion is attended to.

Mr. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.): It is often the case that rows of cottages have a piece of garden land attached which is cut up into small strips and patches, and as it is desirable that these should be extended, I ask whether the term "allotment" will include the extension of these pieces of land for the convenience of those who occupy the cottages?

MR. RITCHIE: I think there will be no difficulty in the way of the Sanitary Authorities making arrangements for the extension of these allotments.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: I think the Government ought to state clearly what is meant by the term "allotment." I understand now that it includes garden ground.

MR. FULLER: After the declaration of the right hon. Gentleman, the President of the Local Government Board, I will ask leave to withdraw my Amendment.

Amendment by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby:) I attach great importance to the Amendment I am about to move, because, as hon. Members opposite are aware, the Boards of Guardians are composed almost entirely of farmers, assisted by magistrates who are *ex officio* members of the Boards. We are anxious, as far as possible, knowing that the Boards of Guardians will not be favourable to putting the Act in force, to leave no loop-hole to these unwilling authorities by which they can escape the duty which the Bill is intended to impose upon them. There are a number of loop-holes provided by the clause, and my Amendment is intended to remove one of them by striking out the words "and that it would be to the public advantage to provide allotments to meet such demand." What will happen is this — the Rural Sanitary Authority will be represented in a particular parish by one or two Guardians; a meeting will be called to consider the requisition which has been presented to the Local Authority by six men in the parish, in accordance with that part of the clause which has been already agreed to. They will consider at length whether there is a demand for allotments in the parish; then they will hold another meeting to satisfy themselves whether or not it is for the public advantage that the requisition should be complied with. Now, quite apart from the delay which will be occasioned by these deliberations, I do not see that the public advantage has anything to do with the question. If it is to the advantage of the labourers to have these allotments, and if it can be done without any charge on the parish, I cannot see why it should have to be proved to be for the public advantage. The introduction of a Bill to deal with this question rests in itself upon the admission that it is for the public advantage that these allotments should be obtained, and I contend therefore that the words which I propose to strike out ought not to be in the Bill.

Amendment proposed,

In page 1, lines 9 and 10, leave out the words "and that it would be to the public advantage to provide allotments to meet such demand."—(*Mr. Cobb.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

MR. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): I have no special objection to the Amendment of the hon. Member; it appears to be the general opinion that a provision for allotments will be for the public advantage.

MR. RITCHIE: I do not attach any special value to these words. Of course, no Sanitary Authorities would be justified in putting the Act in operation unless they believed that it was for the public advantage. I consent to the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman.

Question put, and *negatived.*

MR. HALLEY STEWART (Lincolnshire, Spalding): I should like to understand that the expressions of the right hon. Gentleman opposite apply also to the words of the Clause that I propose to strike out, by the Amendment of which I have given Notice. I propose to leave out from the clause the words—

"And that such allotments cannot be obtained at a reasonable rent by voluntary arrangement between the owners of land suitable for such allotments and the applicants for the same."

If the Committee will expunge these words, I do not think it will in any way limit the power of the Sanitary Authorities in this matter. By agreeing to this Amendment, we shall be simply removing from the forefront of the Bill words which seem to give precedence to the voluntary principle. This Bill is a recognition of the fundamental right of every labourer to apply for land, but I do not think it ought to be encumbered by this intimation that it would be better and wiser for the men to come to an arrangement themselves with the owners of land. An article in *The Times* explains that it is desirable to resort to the voluntary system for the purpose of cultivating a spirit of gratitude on the part of the labourers to the owners of land. But I point out that gratitude generally means in cases of this kind the expectation of a vote, and that is the reason why I object to the retention of these words. I believe in the compulsory principle of this Bill, as a recognition that everyone has a right to an allotment. I believe that that right is inherent in every man, and that is why I desire to see these words struck out.

Amendment proposed,

In page 1, line 10, to leave out from the word "and" to the word "same," in line 13, both inclusive.—(*Mr. Halley Stewart.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'and that such allotments cannot be obtained,' stand part of the Clause."

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I must say I differ entirely from the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Halley Stewart). I should be sorry, indeed, to see all idea of voluntary arrangements between landowners and those who desire to have allotments unrecognized in this Bill. As I said in introducing the Bill, we believe the voluntary mode of arrangement is extremely desirable. I am not going to use the word "gratitude," or any word which may shock the sensibilities of hon. Gentlemen, but I believe that it is of great consequence that there should be good feeling between landlord and tenant, between employer and labourer, and I am satisfied you cannot promote good feeling between these persons better than endeavouring to bring them together. And, further than that, I do not believe you would be justified in setting in motion the machinery of this Bill by which the rates might possibly be appealed to if the demand could be supplied voluntarily and without its aid. The Local Authority ought certainly to consider before putting the machinery of the Bill in motion whether or not the demand which exists is supplied by the voluntary arrangements between landowners and those who desire to have allotments.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby): The Amendment of my hon. Friend (Mr. Halley Stewart) raises, no doubt, a very important principle. I do not wish to discuss it at any great length, but no doubt the essence of this Bill is, to use a phrase which has been employed in these discussions before, that the inhabitants of a village shall depend for allotments upon the community, and not upon the individual. It is not merely a question between compulsory and voluntary action, but it is this—to whom is a person to look for the right to occupy a portion of the soil of the country to which he belongs? Is he to look simply to individual proprietors, or is he to look to the community in which he lives? Everyone knows that in countries such as Switzerland, where small holdings are most flourishing, the recognized principle is that the land is the property of the community, and that the individuals depend upon the community for the right to occupy the soil. I do not wish, in the least degree, to say anything contrary to what the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board has said as to the desirability of cultivating friendly relations between landlord and labourer, but the labourer should not be dependent upon the landlord. It is possible to conceive a landlord of ungenerous mind, and therefore it should not be in the power of such a man to oust the inhabitants from these holdings, to hold the loss of them, as it were, *in terrorem* over them for any purpose he may choose — in order, for instance, to compel them to work for lower wages, or to compel them to work on a particular farm. I, therefore, think that a most important principle is involved in this Amendment. What we really do want is to give to these occupiers in rural districts, and in urban districts also, the security that they have to look, not to the individual proprietors, but to the community at large. I do not want to intrude on voluntary action in this matter. If there is a voluntary supply, that ought to be considered before you have resort to compulsory powers. That I am quite willing to admit, but there is a difficulty about this clause which seems to lie in the words "a reasonable rent." I hope that ultimately—when we get a Local Government Bill—we shall have some better authority than the Board of Guardians. That, unfortunately, is the great evil—I do not say it is an unavoidable evil—in this Bill. You have got an authority which, I believe, for this purpose, is not a good authority; it is an authority which is rather averse than favourable to the objects of the Bill. If the authority wishes not to do the thing they may hold a very high rent to be a reasonable rent. For instance, a landowner may say—"I am willing to let allotments at the rate of £4 or £5 an acre." Now, suppose the Guardians choose to say that is a reasonable rent, they may consider, in the words of this Bill, that "allotments cannot be obtained at a reasonable rent," and hold that to be a reason for not acting at all. They may hold that £5 an acre is a reasonable rent. I admit these difficulties lie in the distrust of the authority itself; and I hope that hereafter we shall be able to get a better authority. However, I do not see myself why we should have these words in the clause after all, except for the purpose of what you may call a declaration of principle. We do not want to fly the flag of compulsion unnecessarily; but, if we can do the thing without these words, I do not see why they should not be omitted.

Mr. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): I quite agree that in moving this Amendment the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Spalding Division (Mr. Halley Stewart) has raised a very important question. I shall not enter into the question of the right of every person to occupy a certain portion of land; though I am afraid that if the hon. Member and his Friends were to compare the population of the country with the number of cultivable acres they would find there are not acres enough within the limits of the country to enable them to carry out their doctrine legitimately and truly. Now, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) says he does not perceive any sufficient reason for keeping these words in the clause. I do not agree with him. I do see such a reason, and I think I shall be able to show him that it is a good and sufficient reason. My reason for wishing to retain the words is precisely the same as that for which hon. Members desire to exclude them. Hon. Gentlemen desire to exclude these words because they say the words appear to give precedence to the voluntary principle. I think that, beyond all question, precedence ought to be given to the voluntary principle, and upon this point I should have thought there could hardly have been a difference of opinion. Surely, upon every conceivable ground, it is desirable and right to avoid converting the Local Authority into a landlord having all the responsibility of a landlord upon it. I contend that the best, and cheapest, and most satisfactory way, in the interests of the labourers themselves, is that allotments should be provided for them by the owners of the land by voluntary means. Let me ask hon. Members to consider a given state of circumstances. Take the case of bad times or bad seasons, and assume that the Local Authority has become the landlord, and that the holdings are held as tenancies under them. Suppose that a labourer holding a tolerably large allotment has been subjected to some of the excessively bad seasons from which farmers frequently suffer. The unfortunate man, owing to losses through no fault of his own, is possibly unable to pay the rent which is due for his allotment. Under such circumstances, to whom, do you suppose, a labourer in this country would rather go? Would he rather go to the Parish Board and ask them to give him time to pay his rent in? Or would he rather go to the landlord on whose estate he has been brought up, and with whom he is possibly on friendly relations? There is another consideration which must not be lost sight of under these circumstances. A landlord is dealing with property which is his own, and in regard to which he can do exactly as he pleases, and make whatever remissions he likes; but the Local Authority will be only trustees. What right will they have to remit rent, and so inflict losses on the ratepayers in regard to property for which they are responsible? I cannot conceive that it can be contended, or logically defended by argument, that it is desirable that these proceedings should be carried out by compulsory rather than by voluntary means; and it is precisely because I do agree with hon. Members that the Bill does give precedence to the voluntary principle that I sincerely hope these words will be retained.

Sir WALTER FOSTER (Derby, Ilkeston): I think that this clause throughout, and especially the portion of it which my hon. Friend the Member for the Spalding Division (Mr. Halley Stewart) has proposed to omit, indicates what has been stated—the distrust of the Government of the very authority they are giving these powers to. The Government, in giving this power, wish to hedge it round with every possible safeguard; and they are suggesting now that the Boards of Guardians shall not take any action for providing allotments unless Boards of Guardians think allotments cannot be attained by voluntary means at reasonable rents. Why, a reasonable rent, in the opinion of the gentlemen who form Boards of Guardians, may be £6 10*s*. an acre. I know a case where allotments are being held at this rent, and that in the same district where the Ecclesiastical Commissioners are letting land at £2 an acre. If you give power to an authority like this to say what is a reasonable rent, you do the very thing to make this bad authority not do the work the Act asks them to do. In the interests of labourers and landlords, in the interests of the passing of this Bill, I appeal to the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board to accede to the Amendment of my hon. Friend. To do so will certainly save time, and will not affect the voluntary principle. Surely, if hon. Gentlemen have faith in the voluntary principle, they do not want to bolster it up in this way.

MR. HANDEL COSSHAM (Bristol, E.): The reason why I intend to support the Amendment of my hon. Friend the Member for the Spalding Division (Mr. Hally Stewart) is that these words are opposed to the whole principle of the Bill. If voluntary arrangements are to be relied upon solely, what need is there at all for the Bill? If the voluntary principle is already meeting the demand, there will be no need for this Act to be put in force. These words are not at all consonant with the principle of the Bill, and therefore I hope the Government will agree to their omission.

MR. COBB (Warwick, S.E, Rugby): I do not think the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire (Mr. Chaplin) quite understands the point we are discussing. It is admitted all round that the labourer or artizan should, if possible, get his land direct from the landlord. It is quite clear that if he can arrange with the landlord he gets land at a cheaper rate than he would get it from the Public Authority. If he can get it, well and good; but the right hon. Gentleman compared the mode of getting land from the landlord with the mode of getting it through the exercise of compulsory powers. That is not the question. The question here is—whether or not the Local Authority is to be the judge of what is a reasonable rent. One of the great principles of this Bill, as explained by the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board, is that the community shall supply land. Now, surely it is a more independent thing for a man to get land from the community in which we hope that, at all events, some day he will have some power in electing the people who are to put this Act in force. Why is he, before he goes to the Local Authority, to go to the landlord, cap in hand, and say—"I have come to you to ask for land. I do not want the land very much, but I am obliged, before going to the Local Authority, to go through the form and degradation to some extent of coming to you, and begging for land in order that I can go to the Local Authority, and say that you will not give it me." [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] That is so. The provision as it stands gives another loophole to the Local Authority through which to escape from putting the Act in force. I hope I am not pressing this matter too strongly, but I do not think it can be put in too many different ways. These Local Authorities are like wheelbarrows; they will go just so far as they are pushed, and no farther. I want to remove from them every opportunity or excuse for obstructing the operation of this Act, and therefore I support the Amendment of my hon. Friend.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): This Amendment embodies a most important principle, and it is desirable that we should understand what that principle is. The arguments of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire (Mr. Chaplin), if they are worth anything at all, would have been useful before the Government were converted to the principle contained in this Bill. The observations of the right hon. Gentleman went to show that landlords had done, and will do, exactly what this Bill is introduced in order to compel them to do. A case has just been cited by the hon. Baronet the Member for the Ilkeston Division of Derbyshire (Sir Walter Foster), in which one landlord insists upon exacting £6 10*s*. an acre for land which is not worth £2. [An hon. MEMBER: Nonsense!] It is not nonsense. Perhaps the hon. Member for Sussex lets his allotments at a lower price; but in many other parts of the country the labourers do have to pay four times as much—[An hon. MEMBER: Six times as much.] Yes; I know they do pay six times as much in some cases, but I want to put it at a fair average; but in many other parts of the country labourers have to pay four times as much as they ought to be required to pay. The argument of the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Chaplin) amounted to this—that landlords might be trusted to do what is right or necessary in this behalf, and that therefore we ought not to introduce any provision of this kind. That argument goes to the whole root of the Bill, and if it is true—I maintain it is not—there would have been no necessity for introducing this Bill at all. The Amendment which the hon. Member for the Spalding Division (Mr. Halley Stewart) has introduced is an important one, and I insist upon it. I take the opportunity of supporting him in it, because my view is that in this question of land the landowner's power ought to be and in the future must be curtailed. We have had enough of absolute power on the part of landowners. What we want to reach is the nationalization of the land. You are proposing it in a modified form—you are proposing the communalization of land. I warn you that you are introducing the thin edge of the wedge which, in the long run, will deprive all landlords of the rights they have usurped. All we want to make as plain as possible, now that we have an opportunity, is that the land belongs to the people, and not to individuals, and that it is to the people that individual members of the community should look for the acquisition of the rights they have been deprived of so long.

MR. STAVELEY HILL (Staffordshire, Kingswinford): The difficulty I have in accepting the Amendment of the hon. Member (Mr. Halley Stewart) is that the words proposed to be left out necessarily involve that there should be an attempt on the part of those applying for allotments to obtain them by voluntary agreement before applying to the Local Authority.

MR. HALLEY STEWART: I will not detain the Committee for more than a moment. All I desire to point out is that the omission of these words will not affect, in the slightest degree, the power of the Local Authority to carry out the spirit of the words which are herein contained, and therefore I cannot understand why the Government should be so reluctant to take them out. The Authority will have exactly the same power of acting on these words if they are out of the Bill as if they were in the Bill.

MR. HOLLOWAY (Gloucestershire, Stroud): My reason for objecting to this Amendment is that I am most thoroughly in favour of the voluntary system. I contend that the effect of this Bill will be that where landowners and farmers have not hitherto provided allotments, when they find that their labourers must be provided with allotments, they will at once set about providing them by voluntary arrangement, and I think that is very much more desirable than the provision of them by the putting in force of the machinery of this Bill. A great deal has been said about the Boards of Guardians and the Local Sanitary Authorities not being popular bodies. I have had great experience of Boards of Guardians, and also of Local Sanitary Authorities in towns, and I have no hesitation in saying that the gentlemen who form these bodies perform their duties in the best interests of the localities. It must not be forgotten, of course, that they represent others than the working men of their districts; they represent every class and every interest in their localities, and they very much wish that the framers of this Bill should define what their duties are to be. I believe that the effect of this Bill will be that allotments will be provided by voluntary means, and that is why I approve of the retention of these words.

MR. BROADHURST (Nottingham, W.): May I point out to the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board, that the omission of these words involves no considerable concession on the part of the Government. There is no principle involved in the Amendment; but the acceptance of the Amendment would be of enormous advantage to the people requiring allotments. If the right hon. Gentleman would reconsider the matter, I am sure he would see that the Amendment will not weaken the voluntary principle at all, but leave that principle precisely where it is now, while removing the great objection entertained to the wording of the clause. If the right hon. Gentleman would only meet my hon. Friend the Member for the Spalding Division (Mr. Halley Stewart) in this respect, we should be extremely glad. None of us approach this subject in a spirit of contention; but all desire to make the Bill as real as possible, and to make its working as smooth and as rapid as possible. I sincerely trust that the right hon. Gentleman will assent to the Amendment.

MR. RITCHIE: No, Sir, I am afraid I cannot do that. There is a real difference of principle between us and hon. Gentlemen opposite. There is, however, no question between us upon the point that where there is a willing buyer and seller, the Local Authority have no right or cause to step in and pledge the rates of the community in order to provide that which can, at a reasonable rate, be provided by a voluntary arrangement between buyer and seller. The whole object of these words is to show to the Local Authority that they must have that consideration in their minds before they dispose of an application that is made to them.

SIR WALTER FOSTER: We do not suppose that they would be such bad men of business as to attempt to buy land compulsorily, when there was a chance of getting it at a fair rent by voluntary arrangement.

Question put.

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 137; Noes 72: Majority 65.—(Div. List, No. 408). [8.50 P.M.]

MR. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby): In the temporary absence of my hon. Friend the Member for the Ilkeston Division of Derby (Sir Walter Foster), I beg to move the Amendment which stands in his name—namely, to leave out the words "at a reasonable rent" in line 11. My hon. Friend's object in wishing to leave out these words is that the word "reasonable" is an indefinite term, and imposes upon the Local Authority another duty which it ought not to be called upon to fulfil, and that, therefore, they are less able probably to carry out the Act than they otherwise would be.

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 11, leave out the words "at a reasonable rent."—(*Mr. Cobb.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed, to be left out, stand part of the Clause."

THE SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. LONG) (Wilts, Devizes): I am sure the Government cannot accept this Amendment. The arguments used against the last Amendment apply equally to this. The words "reasonable rent" raise a great principle, and are important to the wise and proper carrying out of this Bill.

SIR WALTER FOSTER (Derby, Ilkeston): I propose to define what a "reasonable rent" should be according to the definition which has been previously made by Parliament, and incorporated in the Allotments Extension Act of 1882. I object to the words "reasonable rent" here on the ground that they leave to the discretion of every one of these Boards of Guardians, more especially in rural districts, the duty of defining what "reasonable rent" is. As I have quoted one instance to the Committee which some hon. Gentleman opposite seem to doubt, I will quote it again. I know a district in which very recently allotments were let at a rent as high as £10 per acre. [*Cries of* "Where?"] In Derbyshire. Representations were made upon the question, and the rents were reduced to £6 10*s.* per acre. In the same parish the Ecclesiastical Commissioners are letting allotments at £2 per acre; but, as a matter of fact, the agricultural value of the land in the parish is 25*s.* per acre. If you have a body of people who regarded £6 10*s.* an acre as a reasonable rent when the agricultural value of the land in the same parish is only 25*s.* per acre, there is a danger of these people interpreting the words "reasonable rent" in such a way as would prevent the compulsory clause of this Bill being put into force. The Government have in this matter proceeded with that caution which produces paralysis. By the inclusion of the words "reasonable rent" they establish another barrier—there are four or five in the clause—against bringing the compulsory powers of the Bill into force. I believe that is a bad policy, and a bad policy in their own interests. I believe that voluntary methods will be increased the stronger the compulsory powers are made in the Act. Landlords will not want the compulsory powers to be exercised, and they in their own interests will give allotments at reasonable rents to labourers. But by putting these several barriers in the way of the provision of allotments, the Government will produce irritation, disaffection, and annoyance in the minds of the labourers in every rural parish in England. The labourers in the rural districts are at the present time disaffected and discontented enough, I do not want them in the interests of a much higher conservatism than that which seems to animate hon. Gentleman opposite, to be kept any longer than is necessary in a condition of disaffection and discontent. I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for the Spalding Division of Lincolnshire (Mr. Halley Stewart) that men have an inherent right to the occupation of the soil. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire (Mr. Chaplin) says that there would not be land enough in the country to enable us to put our doctrine into force. There is plenty of land in the country available for allotments, and no difficulty on that score exists to the application of our principle. On these grounds, I ask the Committee to take out these words in order that afterwards a definition of "reasonable rent" may be inserted. The definition I suggest is—

> "At such a rent as (exclusive of tithe, tithe-rent charge, rates and taxes), land of the same quality is usually let for in the same parish."

It is a definition of "reasonable rent" which has been accepted by another Parliament, a definition of which my hon. Friend the Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham (Mr. Jesse Collings)—whose support I claim for this Amendment—approved.

Mr. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley): This Amendment does not refer to land that has been acquired by compulsory purchase. It does not refer to land rented by Local Authorities. If so, it is not necessary, because there is an arrangement that the land let by Local Authorities should be let as cheaply as possible, so that there should be no loss accruing to Local Authorities. But, as according to this voluntary principle you have created labourers, when they ask for land, are to be referred to the landowners to see if they can get it voluntarily before the Sanitary Authority moves, it becomes a question as to what price they are to get it at, and I hope the Government will see that getting it at a price above the market price is not for the purpose of the Act getting it at all. Some standard of price should be set up. It can do no harm to the landowner, because surely the landlord does not want to get more from the labourer for an allotment than he gets for his other land. That being so, I believe that this Amendment would give protection to the labourer that he should not be over-rented. I can quite see that there may be a reason for a landowner charging a little more on account of his legal expenses, and therefore it may be well to insert the word "about" in the definition of a "reasonable rent," which the hon. Member (Sir Walter Foster) suggests, so that the definition would read—

> "At about such a rent as land of the same quality is usually let for in the same parish."

Then I take it that my hon. Friend means that the rent shall be exclusive of tithe, tithe rent charge, rates and taxes, and "other outgoings which rightly belong to the land." If the Government will accept a definition such as I suggest, I do not think that any injury would be done to the landlord by this clause. What is wanted is that the labourer shall be protected from being over-rented.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir Richard Webster) (Isle of Wight): It is impossible to discuss various Amendments under one; the discussion will be shortened if we keep to one Amendment. We are now discussing whether the question of the rent at which allotments can be obtained under the voluntary principle shall or shall not be taken into consideration by the Local Authority before they put the compulsory powers into force. If we are going to define "reasonable rent," let us define it in the proper place. I am quite prepared to reason this matter out on its merits. We consider, as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) put it very plainly, that there was a case of hardship which ought to be met. It is said "Allotments can be got; A B and C are willing to let them." The reply may be "Yes, but they are charging unreasonable rents." The omission of these words, however, will have an effect contrary to what the hon. Member (Sir Walter Foster) imagines. If it is our object that allotments shall be obtained at a reasonable rent, it is clear that these words ought to remain in the clause. However, "reasonable rent" may be defined, we do consider that the Local Authority ought not to put the public rates in peril—ought not to bring into operation this machinery for acquiring land; they ought to satisfy themselves that land cannot be obtained at a reasonable rent on the voluntary principle.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby): I think that, practically speaking, there is not a great deal of difference between us. We admit there should be a reasonable rent, but we think that there ought to be an instruction to the Boards of Guardians as to what a reasonable rent is, and that that instruction should practically be that the rent should be rent equivalent to the ordinary agricultural value. Now, we are all agreed about that, the only question is of arranging how it is to be done, whether the definition of reasonable rent shall come in here or at the end of the subsections, or elsewhere in the Bill. We ought to have an understanding with the Government that an instruction will be given to the Local Authorities that a reasonable rent means an ordinary agricultural rent.

SIR RICHARD WEBSTER: I was discussing simply and solely the question of whether the words should be left out at this point or not. In my opinion, these words must stand here for the purpose of protecting those who desire allotments. It is impossible to discuss now what is, or what is not, a reasonable rent.

VISCOUNT WOLMER (Hants, Petersfield): We, on this side of the House, who feel that there is a real opening for mismanagement by the Local Authority under the clause as it stands now, cannot consent to allow these words to remain in the clause unless we have an assurance from the Government that they will be properly defined afterwards. Those of us who have experience of agricultural constituencies know that Boards of Guardians are quite likely to interpret this word "reasonable" in what we consider a very unreasonable manner. Therefore, I certainly am not prepared to vote for the insertion of these words until I know how they will afterwards be defined.

MR. STAVELEY HILL (Staffordshire, Kingswinford): I agree with the noble Lord (Viscount Wolmer) that we ought not to allow such unmeaning words as "reasonable rent" to remain in the clause unless we have some promise that they will be defined. I do not think that we have yet hit upon what should be the definition of "reasonable rent." I myself have tried to draw up a definition, but I have not been successful. Possibly the definition suggested by the hon. Member (Sir Walter Foster) may be considered a proper one.

SIR RICHARD WEBSTER: I must repeat that I am perfectly willing to undertake to insert upon Report a definition if it is desired, but these words cannot be left out here. I ought not to be asked to pledge myself to a particular form of definition. I quite agree that a definition ought to be inserted, and of course if the present one is not satisfactory it can be dealt with on Report, but some such words as these must be left in the clause.

MR. HENEAGE (Great Grimsby): If the Government undertake that they will bring up a definition later on, I cannot see the objection to letting these words remain.

SIR WALTER FOSTER: Will the hon. and learned Attorney General bring the definition up before we leave Committee?

SIR RICHARD WEBSTER: Certainly.

MR. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): Before this discussion concludes, I should like to call the attention of the hon. and learned Attorney General to the words used by the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) in the debate on the second reading of the Bill. The right hon. Gentleman said distinctly that one of the principles of the Bill was that allotments should be let at the ordinary agricultural price of the land.

SIR RICHARD WEBSTER: I am sure that my right hon. Friend the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) will not recede from any words he has used. Again, I must plead that I ought not to be asked to insert a definition at this stage.

Mr. HANDEL COSSHAM (Bristol, E.): The whole question lies in this, that if agricultural labourers cannot get allotments at a reasonable rent the whole Act becomes a failure.

Mr. JESSE COLLINGS: I trust that after the undertaking which the hon. and learned Attorney General has given the Amendment will be withdrawn. The undertaking is given very plainly, and without any qualification. I think that it would be well that the Amendment should now be withdrawn and the definition brought up subsequently.

Mr. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): I appeal to the hon. Member to withdraw his Amendment. I cannot think there is any real difference between us as to the meaning of the words "reasonable rent."

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I do not see why we should not proceed at once with the consideration of what is a reasonable standard. I cannot understand why we should postpone this matter to a later stage if we are all agreed.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 11, after "rent," insert "and on reasonable conditions."—(*Mr. Chance.*)

Question, "That those words be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 15, to leave out the words "whether within or without their district or the said parish."—(*Mr. Chaplin.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

Mr. LONG: I am afraid we cannot accept this Amendment.

Mr. CHAPLIN: Then I do not press it.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Mr. SEALE-HAYNE (Devon, Ashburton): The Amendment of which I have given Notice requires a little alteration, owing to the Amendment which has been accepted by the Government. It should read—"Where not less than six registered electors of any parish, &c." instead of "Where not less than ten inhabitants of full age of any parish, &c.," and that at the end the words "and that it would be of public advantage to meet such demand as aforesaid" should be omitted. Amended as I suggest, the Amendment would read—

> "Where not less than six registered electors of any parish in any rural or urban district containing according to the last Census Returns, not less than five hundred inhabitants, or of any two or more contiguous parishes in any rural or urban district containing in the aggregate five hundred inhabitants, apply in writing, addressed to such sanitary authority, to be provided with allotments and certify that they are unable to obtain them in such parish or parishes at reasonable rents, such application shall be sufficient proof of a demand for allotments."

Now, Sir, we have provided that the rent shall be reasonable in the opinion of the Local Sanitary Authority; what we have to provide is what shall be evidence of demand for allotments. I hold that where six registered electors in a parish or parishes containing 500 inhabitants certify that they are unable to obtain allotments at reasonable rents, that fact is in itself evidence that there is a demand for allotments. Sanitary Authorities, and notably Board of Guardians, are bodies of men who will probably have altogether different ideas, as to what is evidence of the demand for allotments. One Board of Guardians may consider one set of circumstances sufficient evidence, and another Board of Guardians may take a precisely opposite view. Boards of Guardians——

The CHAIRMAN: Order, order! I have been considering this Amendment, and I think it is precluded by what the Committee has already done. The clause as passed through the Committee says—

> "On a representation made by six electors the sanitary authority shall take such representation into consideration; if the sanitary authority are of opinion, after inquiry made after such a representation, that there is a demand, &c."

It is clear that, if the representation itself constitutes evidence that there is a demand, it would be inappropriate to suggest they should make subsequent inquiries to arrive at the same conclusion. Such a suggestion is inconsistent with what has already been passed.

Mr. SEALE HAYNE: The object of the clause is merely to determine what is sufficient evidence of a considerable demand for allotments, or rather a demand for allotments, the word "considerable" being taken out.

The CHAIRMAN: To come to the exact point, the proposal of the Amendment is that this application on the part of a certain number of residents is to dispense with proof of the demand. What has already been assented to implies the further possibility of the existence of a demand, and therefore this suggestion is inconsistent with what has already been done.

Mr. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I should like to point out that this only refers to one of several conditions which the Local Government Board may require to have complied with. Having framed the general proposition that it shall be lawful for the Local Authority to require evidence on certain points, this will go to show what shall be evidence on this point. If, instead of saying that such application shall be sufficient proof of a demand for allotments, it would be as well to alter the Amendment so as to declare that such application shall be deemed to be *pimâ facie* proof of a demand for allotments. Probably the insertion of those words would put the Amendment in order.

The CHAIRMAN: If the hon. Member for Ashburton (Mr. Seale-Hayne) persists in moving his Amendment I will not prevent him.

Mr. SEALE-HAYNE: With the permission of the Committee I will move my Amendment in the form suggested by the hon. Member for South Kilkenny (Mr. Chance), though I am bound to say I think the new words take the backbone out of my Amendment. I need not add more to what I have said already, but I will only express a hope that in its altered form the Amendment will effect the object I have in view.

Amendment proposed,

In page 1, line 18, after "same," insert—"Where not less than ten inhabitants of full age of any parish in any rural or urban district containing, according to the last Census Returns, not less than five hundred inhabitants, or of any two or more contiguous parishes in any rural or urban district containing in the aggregate five hundred inhabitants, apply in writing, addressed to such sanitary authority, to be provided with allotments and certify that they are unable to obtain them in such parish or parishes at reasonable rents, such application may be taken as *primâ facie* proof of a demand for allotments, and that it would be of public advantage to meet such demand as aforesaid."—(*Mr. Seale-Hayne.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

The PRESIDENT of the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. Ritchie) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): As the hon. Member who moved this Amendment has had so little to say in support of it, I presume he will not expect me to say very much in opposing it. All I can say is that having already entrusted the Local Authority with the duty of holding an inquiry, our view is that they should be the judges as to whether or not there is a *primâ facie* demand for allotments, and that it would be derogating from the power so given to them to accept the Amendment.

Mr. CHANCE: I think the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board does not recognize the fact that what has occurred on many estates already would in an informal manner constitute a *primâ facie* proof of a desire for allotments on the part of agricultural labourers. The only object of the framers of this Bill is to make the procedure as simple, rapid, and inexpensive as possible. Well, this Amendment will go a long way towards attaining that object. The right hon. Gentleman has stated that the Local Authority will themselves be the best judges of what constitute or does not constitute a *primâ facie* case. I deny that absolutely. I say they will be bound by the ordinary rules of procedure, and bound by the ordinary rules of law; and that if they attempt to take hold of land, it will be possible for the person from whom they attempt to take it to get up a case, and say—"I did not refuse the land; land can be obtained at a reasonable price." What will be the position of these people under such circumstances? They will have to show that there is a demand for allotments, and that allotments are not to be obtained in the ordinary way. That will have to be shown by evidence, otherwise I presume a mandamus will lie in order to prevent them from taking land compulsorily. All those ordinary provisions inserted in so many Acts of Parliament for the purpose of facilitating procedure and saving expense, in a case of this kind, will apply. The Amendment merely goes to this, that when the other side says nothing, the Local Authority is to be satisfied with the signature of these six or 10 registered electors that a *primâ facie* case has been made. That is all it does. It does not preclude the landlord from coming in and saying that such demand does not exist; it only throws the onus on him that such a demand does not exist. It is altogether for the simplification of the procedure, and to render it less expensive; and, therefore, I cannot, for the life of me, see why it should be resisted.

MR. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): I think the information before the Committee should be sufficient to induce it to adopt the principle I raised on a previous Amendment, and to require that the onus of proof should be placed on the authorities, or those who refuse to allow land to be obtained for allotments. I think in that sense it would be desirable that these words should be accepted, and I sincerely hope they will be accepted by the Committee.

MR. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): I venture to think that an Amendment such as this, altered to meet your ruling, Sir, in the point of Order, will not be of the least value from the point of view of the hon. Members behind me. But supposing it were carried as it originally stood on the Paper, and that it would give them all they desire, I would submit to them that this Amendment, and all Amendments having a similar purpose, are an entire mistake. What would be the effect of an Amendment of this kind? Why, it would be to put it in the power of six constituents of the Local Authority to force the hands of the Local Authority, and to cause the expenditure of the ratepayers' money. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] Yes, that would be the effect of it. The effect of a great number of Amendments which have been moved by hon. Members behind me, and certainly the effect of this one, would be to humiliate and degrade the Local Authority, and to weaken its influence and power. I quite understand the point of view from which this Amendment has been put before the Committee. Hon. Members think the Sanitary Authority is not a satisfactory authority for the administration of this Bill, and I quite agree with them. In its present form, I think the Local Authority is a most unsatisfactory authority to which to entrust the administration of a measure of this kind. When the proper time comes, I shall promote, to the utmost of my power, a comprehensive scheme for the reform of the existing Local Authority. I hope to see the Sanitary Authority made a thoroughly representative body, such as the Town Councils in our boroughs are; but I will not be a party to anything which will degrade the Local Authority, whatever it may be. I will do nothing to limit their functions and their influence and power. Keep those qualities, so that the Local Authority may be the supreme authority in each district; and if you find that it is not thoroughly representative, by all means promote amendments in the law whenever an opportunity arises in order to make it so. I do not think there are many hon. Members behind me who have had so much experience of Local Authorities and their work as I have had: and I do not think anyone has done more to promote the dignity and importance of local bodies. That being so, I think I am right in venturing to advise my hon. Friends that, while they should do all they could to make the Local Authority thoroughly representative and popular, they should do nothing to lessen its influence and degrade it in the eyes of its constituents, or to make its constituents independent of it in any sense. What happened the other day? We were discussing, I think it was, the Technical Instruction Bill. In connection with that Bill, there was a proposal that a *plébiscite* in a constituency should be taken before the Local Authority should put into force its powers under the Bill. My hon. Friends behind me were against that to a man, and I was against it, because I thought nothing would be more likely to degrade and lessen the Local Authority—and if you are going to refuse to give a majority of the ratepayers power to dictate to the Local Authority in a matter like technical education, surely you are not going to give six of the ratepayers the power of forcing the hands of the Local Authority under this Bill. If you did, you would reduce the Local Authority to such a pitch of degradation that I do not think you would find it possible to get respectable people to associate themselves with those bodies.

MR. SEALE-HAYNE: I feel perfectly confident that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham would not have made the speech he has just delivered if he had had any experience of Rural Authorities.

MR. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN: I beg the hon. Member's pardon. I live in a county.

MR. SEALE-HAYNE: It does not follow that because the right hon. Gentleman lives in a county he has any experience of Boards of Guardians.

MR. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN: But I have.

MR. SEALE-HAYNE: If the right hon. Gentleman finds no fault with the Local Authority to whom the carrying out of this Act is to be entrusted he must have Rural Boards of Guardians in his district of an exceedingly exemplary character. However, Sir, I will take the sense of the House on this matter, and accept its decision simply on the principle that half a loaf is better than no bread.

MR. CHANCE: The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham has told us that this Amendment, if accepted, will degrade the Local Authority, and force the hands of the Local Authority to a very lamentable extent. May I point out that all that it will do is this? It will give to the Local Authority certain *primâ facie* evidence, and save them the expense of attempting to prove the general need for allotments by obtaining local evidence. It does not compel them to take any action whatsoever. But I would turn back on the Amendment. I do not know, Sir, whether the right hon. Gentleman was in the House when an Amendment proposed by the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham (Mr. Jesse Collings) was accepted—and I understand that that hon. Gentleman usually acts with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, who is so anxious not to degrade the Local Authority, and not to force the hands of the Local Authority—the hon. Member proposed, and asked the Committee to accept, an Amendment by which 10 or six householders, I forget which, could absolutely compel the Local Authority to hold an inquiry. It seems to me that if the observations of the right hon. Gentleman were applicable to any Amendment it would have been to the Amendment of the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division, who would degrade the Local Authority, and force their hands, by enabling six ratepayers of the district to compel them to hold an inquiry. The right hon. Gentleman might have complained of that Amendment, but, as nothing of the kind would be effected by this Amendment, I do not see what exception he can take to it. The present proposal simply would enable the Local Authority to get evidence by an easy and rapid means.

MR. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby): I am sure that everyone will admit that the experience of my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham (Mr Joseph Chamberlain) in any matter of this kind is very great indeed, and I am also sure that no one would pay more deference to it than I should myself; but I must say, if we had had another authority named in this Bill, as I have pointed out in regard to other Amendments, this proposal would not have been necessary; but, under existing circumstances, we feel that we are bound to take every opportunity we can in discussing this matter to force the Local Authorities as far as possible. Now this Amendment, even emasculated as I own it is to a very large extent by alterations which we have been obliged to make in it, no doubt prevents the necessity of taking evidence which the Local Authority would otherwise be bound to take; and I would ask why is the word of these 10 registered electors not to be taken? Why are they not to be believed? Why are we to trust to the Sanitary Authority—I mean the Boards of Guardians—an authority admitted, I believe, on all hands—even by the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board—to be by no means a satisfactory authority? Well, we do wish to do that which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham accused us of desiring to do—we do wish to restrain the power of the Boards of Guardians. We do wish to tie their hands. We do wish to lessen their power for doing harm, for we think it would be very harmful if they were to refrain from putting the provisions of this Bill into force. The right hon. Gentleman said he would do everything in his power to get a thoroughly good representative, popular Local Authority in place of the Rural Sanitary Authority. I am quite sure he will do so. No one in this country has done more towards that end than he has; but what evidence have we that the present Government are going to bring in a Local Government Bill next year? What evidence is there that we are going to get from them a good Local Authority? I have studied, so far as I could, the Boundaries Commission Bill. So far as I could judge from that, and from what the right hon. Gentleman who introduced it said in his speech, it seems to me that we have very little prospect of getting a good popular representative authority in place of the Rural Sanitary Authority; and what I think the Government point to in the remarks they have made, and also what I think the Boundaries Commission Bill points to, is more to having a County Authority than anything else. Now, they may depend upon this, although I do not suppose they will take my opinion on the matter, that they will find that only a popular authority properly elected will ever be able to settle the allotments question. The Allotment Authorities should be elected in very much smaller areas than the Sanitary Authorities. This Amendment, to a small extent, I admit, but to some extent, protects the public by placing the power of initiative in the hands of these 10 registered electors. It obliges the Local Authority to accept, at all events, as *primâ facie* evidence, the assurance of these 10 registered electors. If, therefore, the hon. Gentleman who has moved the Amendment carries it to a Division, I shall vote with him.

Mr. RITCHIE: I do not wish to touch upon a matter which is not germane to this Amendment, though allusion has been made to it on more than one occasion. The hon. Gentleman is quite mistaken in supposing that the present Government imagine they will deal adequately with the question of local government, if they confine their attention to the reform of local county government or to the setting up of a County Authority. If the hon. Member saw the Bill now in print he would find that we propose not only to deal with County Authorities, but with all authorities within the county. With reference to what has been said by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, I entirely agree with him that this Amendment would be a distinct slur upon the Local Authority. It would say to them that they must accept as *bonâ fide* evidence a certain thing is to my mind to show that they cannot be trusted.

Mr. Cobb

Mr. CHANCE: The Amendment does not say anything of the kind.

Mr. RITCHIE: To my mind the Amendment is in effect a declaration that the Local Authorities cannot be trusted. It may be very true that the present Local Authority is not altogether a satisfactory authority. I am not prepared to say that it is; but it is the best we have, and the hon. Member must remember that whatever restrictions are imposed upon this body will apply equally to the Local Authority to be created in the future. I would point out to the hon. Gentleman, what he seems to have forgotten, that this Bill applies not only to Boards of Guardians, but also to Urban Authorities and Town Councils.

Mr. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley): I have been reading the Amendment very carefully, and I must say I cannot tell what is the object of it. First of all, it applies not only, as the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government has said, to Improvement Commissioners and to Local Boards, but also to Town Councils, and it says in effect that if 10 or six men certify that they are unable to obtain allotments in a parish or parishes at reasonable rents, that is to be taken as a proof that there is a reasonable demand for allotments. What is to take place then? There is either to be an inquiry or there is not. I presume the hon. Gentleman the Mover of the Amendment (Mr. Seale-Hayne) does not mean to say that only the 10 men or the six men are to have the allotments, and no one else? [Mr. Seale-Hayne: No, no!] Then is there to be an inquiry? If the Amendment seeks to lay down a course by which the want of allotments in any district can be made known, that has been already provided for in the Bill. If there is no question as to there being a want of allotments in a certain district, and if the statement of these six or 10 men is to be taken as *primâ facie* evidence that there is such a want, I fail to see how the extent of the want can be ascertained without inquiry. Is there to be an inquiry? [*Cries of* "Yes!"] If that is the sole object of the Amendment, then it is amply provided for by an Amendment already passed, by which six inhabitants or persons may put the Sanitary Authority in motion to make such inquiry. Therefore, it appears to me that there is no object to be gained by adopting this Amendment.

Mr. SEALE-HAYNE: If the hon. Member had read the Amendment, he would find that all it provides for is that the Sanitary Authority should take such representation into consideration as *primâ facie* evidence, and nothing more.

Mr. NEWNES (Cambridge, E., Newmarket): I think it is necessary we should be able to force the hands of the Local Authority. If the Bill is to be of any use whatever, those for whom it is intended to provide allotments ought to have them where they want them. There is a demand spoken of in another part of the Bill, and what we want is to make that demand a specific one. The demand spoken of is only a general demand. Well, that demand may not be recognized by the Local Authority, but by this Amendment it is made a specific demand by six or 10 inhabitants coming and declaring that there is a want of allotments. On such representation being made, the Local Authority will have to take notice of it, and to put in force this Bill.

Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): I am unable to agree with some of my hon. Friends around me with regard to this Amendment, as I believe it open to the objections stated by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain). It is intended to force the hands of the Local Authorities—in other words, it is intended to take away from them their discretion, and to compel them to take a particular course against their better judgment. The same argument was used in connection with the Artizans' Dwellings Act. It was attempted to force the hands of the Local Authority under that measure; but the House very wisely refused to interfere with the discretion of the Local Authority. The House considered that on the whole it was well to trust the Local Authority. If you do not trust them, then reform them; but do not destroy local government by endeavouring to take discretion out of their hands. It is for this reason that I disagree with the whole course of proceeding in connection with Amendments of this kind. I object to them, though I am quite as strongly in favour of doing everything possible to give efficiency to this Act as any hon. Gentleman; but I will not do anything to improve the Bill which I think will have the effect of destroying in any way the authority of local governing bodies.

Mr. HANDEL COSSHAM (Bristol, E.): I will not occupy more than one moment of the time of the Committee; but I wish just to say that if I thought the effect of this Amendment would be what the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham declares I would not vote for the Amendment. But I do not think it will have the effect he says. If he will recollect this fact, that the object of the Bill is not to degrade Local Authorities, but to give increased authority to them, and that all we are trying to do is to put upon them as much restriction as will secure the object we are aiming at, I do not think that he will take so strong an objection to the proposal. The object in view in this Amendment is not to secure the degradation of the Local Authorities, but to secure allotments.

Sir WALTER FOSTER (Derby, Ilkeston): I wish to say that the language used by the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) more than once in the course of this debate was to the effect that because Boards of Guardians are trusted with the arrangements for the health of their districts, that, therefore, we ought to be willing to trust them in these matters. I maintain that Boards of Guardians are the most unsatisfactory Local Authority in the district, and I cannot have confidence in them for the administration of this Act. It is a new phase in the character of the right hon. Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain), that he of all men in the world should be vindicating the character of Boards of Guardians, defending them, and wishing us not to degrade an authority which consists, to a large extend, of *ex officio* members. We find in that town in which I have the honour to dwell with the right hon. Member for West Birmingham, that there is not a very strong appreciation of or belief in bodies so constituted. What we believe in in Birmingham are Boards elected wholly by the people, on the principle of the one man one vote. That is the principle we support and advocate as much as possible. If we had such a system of election under this Act we should be willing to repose the greatest confidence in the Local Authorities to whom these powers are to be entrusted.

MR. SHEEHY (Galway, S.): This Amendment touches very closely on one fault in Ireland, and I presume we shall wish to have this Act applied to that country. I do not see why we should not have in Ireland the benefits of legislation which passes this House, particularly of legislation of this character. You can give us plenty of coercion—[*Cries of* "Order!"] I am assuming that we Irish Members may wish to have this Act applied to Ireland, and I am discussing this Amendment as if it will be so applied. If the measure is so applied the contention of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) will not at all apply in Ireland, because there we have not the popular franchise for the election of our Local Authorities as you have in this country.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): I wish to ask whether the hon. Gentleman is speaking at all to the Amendment before the House. If he desires to extend the Bill to Ireland he can move a clause for that purpose at the proper time.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): On the point of Order, Mr. Chairman, I wish to say——

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order!

COLONEL NOLAN: On the point of Order——

THE CHAIRMAN: If I were going to silence the hon. Member, the hon. and gallant Member would perhaps have some reason to speak; but all I intend to say is, that although it may be inconvenient to raise the question as to the necessity of reforms of this kind in Ireland, the hon. Member is not out of Order in what he is saying on this clause.

COLONEL NOLAN: Hear, hear!

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order!

MR. SHEEHY: The contention of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham would be, that if this Amendment is accepted it would be a slur on the Sanitary Authority who will have to administer the Act. That would be so if it were well known that the Sanitary Authority would take active steps to apply the Act and to carry out its spirit; but if they should act selfishly and sluggishly the question would assume a different aspect.

Question put.

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 67; Noes 156: Majority 89.—(Div. List, No. 409.) [10.0 P.M.]

MR. HOBHOUSE (Somerset, E.): I move the Amendment which stands in my name, with the view of getting the Government to remove altogether or to modify the 2nd sub-section of this clause, which says—

> "A Sanitary Authority shall not under this Act acquire land for allotments save at such price or rent that all expenses incurred by the Sanitary Authority in acquiring the land and otherwise in relation to the allotments may reasonably be expected to be recouped out of the rents obtained in respect thereof, and where it is not practicable to acquire land suitable for allotments at such price or rent as aforesaid, nothing in this Act shall require the Sanitary Authority to acquire land for allotments."

I should propose to insert in place of that sub-section the following:—

> "Nothing in this section shall make it obligatory on a Sanitary Authority to acquire land for allotments save at such a price or rent as may, in their opinion, having regard to all the circumstances of the district, be a reasonable price or rent."

I think, if this sub-section is carried as it stands, it will form a very serious obstacle in the way of the working, at any rate, of the compulsory clauses of this Bill. Its terms are very peremptory. It prohibits the Sanitary Authority from acquiring land for allotments, if at such price or rent, that all expenses incurred by the Sanitary Authority——

MR. STAVELEY HILL: I rise to Order. I have an Amendment on the Paper before that of the hon. Member.

MR. HALLEY STEWART (Lincolnshire, Spalding): And I also have an Amendment on the Paper before that of the hon. Member.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes; the hon. Member's Amendment comes afterwards.

MR. STAVELEY HILL: I move to omit Sub-section 2. Hon. Members on the other side of the House may not think very highly of the Local Sanitary Authorities; and some hon. Member on this side may not have a very high opinion of them; but considering we intend to entrust them with the carrying out of this Bill, it is scarcely right on the part of the Government to depreciate them as they have done. My objection to Sub-section 2 is that it is altogether out of place. If the Sanitary Authorities do not see their way to recoup the expenses out of the rents obtained, they may not acquire the land, and where it is not practicable to acquire land at the necessary price or rent, nothing in the Act shall require the Sanitary Authority to secure land for allotments. I cannot see any reason why we should put upon the Local Authorities this restriction.

Amendment proposed, in page 1, leave out sub-section (2).—(*Mr. Staveley Hill.*)

Question proposed, "That Sub-section 2 stand part of the Clause."

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): Sir, the whole effect of leaving out this sub-section would be to expressly negative the instruction to the Local Authority that they are to have regard to the consideration whether allotments may reasonably be expected to recoup their cost out of the rents to be paid in respect of them. If there is one principle of more importance than another, it is that there should be nothing in the Bill which would seem to support the theory that it is the duty of the Local Authority to provide allotments out of the rates. In my opinion, that would be not only demoralizing to those who may have to become the occupants of allotments, but it would also greatly damage and impair the efficiency of the Bill. The only instruction given in this sub-section is that the authority is to exercise reasonable care, that in considering the question of acquiring land for these allotments they have a reasonable expectation that they will not have to fall back on the rates. I conceive that nothing is more likely to damage the system of allotments, and to make the whole system more unpopular, than that the Sanitary Authority should acquire the land at such a price as would entail a demand being made on the rates of the locality. For these reasons I cannot accept the Amendment.

MR. HOBHOUSE: As I object to this sub-section on rather different grounds to the hon. and learned Gentleman opposite (Mr. Staveley Hill), perhaps I may be allowed to explain my views to the Committee. I am sure we all agree with the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board, who has charge of the Bill, in wishing that no burden which is not inevitable should be imposed upon the ratepayers; but, at the same time, I am sure we must all agree, and certainly I myself should agree, that it is undesirable to put such sweeping provisions into the Bill as would tend in certain cases to make the compulsory clauses absolutely unworkable. I wish to point out to the Government the exceedingly sweeping language of the clause, and the effect it may have on the mind of any ordinary Sanitary Authority. Sanitary Authorities have to take into account, in framing their reasonable expectations, all expenses incurred "in acquiring land and otherwise." These expenses may include not only the actual purchase money but also what one may call the expenses incident to the possession of the land, such as improvement, management, bad debts, and such things which must be allowed for in many cases; also compensation to outgoing tenants, and all those expenses that every landowner has to pay. They will not only include these expenses — which may very fairly, I admit, be recouped out of the rent—but also in many cases—in all cases where compulsory powers are put into force—a large amount of what may be called preliminary expenses. There is a provision in this Bill at the beginning of Clause 6 which provides that rent should be fixed at an amount not less than such as may reasonably be expected to insure the Sanitary Authority from loss. I submit to the Government that that direction alone is sufficient to protect the ratepayer in the majority of cases. But in those cases in which the compulsory powers have to be put into force, there are a large mass of preliminary expenses which may reasonably be expected to be incurred by the Sanitary Authority, if opposition is offered to their putting these powers in force. Let me remind the Committee that, in the first place, the Sanitary Authority have to hold an inquiry themselves. They will, no doubt, have to employ a surveyor to arrive at a proper value of the land and the proposed site for the allotment. Then there is the petition to the County Authority or the Local Government Board as the case may be. There are the notices that are prescribed by the Land Clauses Acts incorporated by this Bill. Then there is the inquiry of the County Authority or the Local Government Board in cases of opposition on the part of the landowners, and the Sanitary Authority will have to put in an appearance either by their clerks or more likely by a lawyer, and they will have to produce evidence to prove their case. Then there is the Provisional Order which may be opposed, and which has been opposed in some instances in this House, and which will, if opposed, have to go to a Select Committee, where the Sanitary Authority, who is the promoter of the Provisional Order under this Bill, will have to appear by counsel, and will, consequently, have to incur very heavy costs. And when the Provisional Order is obtained there are all the expenses of the Land Clauses Consolidation Act for fixing the value of the land in cases of dispute. There will be costs to be incurred in some cases of arbitration or inquiry before a jury, which have partly or wholly to be borne by the promoters of the Provisional Order; and, lastly, there are the costs of conveyances for vesting the land and the costs of verifying titles, and ascertaining to whom the purchase money is to be paid. Now, I submit that, in many cases where real opposition is offered—in the case of a Sanitary Authority taking the land compulsorily—all these costs, or many of them, will have to be or may be, reasonably expected to be incurred by such authority, and I submit that such authority will, in case of bitter opposition threatened by churlish landowners, under this clause, have a perfectly good excuse, and even a justification, for not putting the compulsory powers in force at all. And therefore I very much fear that if this sub-section stands, as it at present does, on the very face of the Bill, the Sanitary Authority will have very good ground for saying that it is forbidden by the Bill itself from resorting to compulsion, because of the preliminary expenses that it will have, or may have to bear, and which will, or may, be so great that it will be perfectly impossible to recoup them out of the rents. What I wish to urge on the Government is this—that either they should withdraw this sub-section, and substitute some such words as I have proposed on the Paper—words simply showing that it is not obligatory on the Sanitary Authority to acquire land by voluntary agreement except at a reasonable price, or that they will introduce words into the clause, to show that the expenses mentioned here do not include—what as they stand at present, they certainly would include—all expenses, whether preliminary or otherwise, attaching to the acquisition of land, whether by agreement or by compulsion.

Mr. AINSLIE (Lancashire, N. Lonsdale): If I had the drawing of this clause, I could not have put better into words what I feel upon this subject. The Committee may not be aware that there are sections of this country where some ratepayers pay the bulk of the rates. In cases like this the bulk of the rates are paid by one or two persons. I want to know why the Sanitary Authority in such cases as these should have the power of deciding to spend my money, which is the ratepayers' money, in acquiring land, the cost of which there will not be a reasonable prospect of recouping from the rents? I am not prepared to say that every word and every line of this clause is exactly what I myself should have put in. But in regard to that, I shall not be following the very good example of the Leaders of my Party if I objected to it. But I do maintain that there is a principle involved in this section which the Committee ought to study; and I trust in whatever way the wishes of this Committee may be met by the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board, he will, at any rate, not lose sight of the fact that there is a section of the community who may be entirely overridden by the Local Authority elected on the principle which hon. Members opposite have referred to to-day, that of "one man, one vote," whereby the one man and the one vote may entirely override property belonging to his neighbours. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] Pardon me, I have not misstated the fact, whatever our differences may be as to the legality of it—I am not overstating the fact that under these circumstances the "one man, one vote" might under this section probably acquire power to deal with my property in a way in which I should not like it to be dealt with. I therefore hope that in any modifications of this clause which the right hon. Gentleman may assent to, that point, at any rate, will not be lost sight of.

MR. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): The very strong arguments which have been used against this sub-section by the hon. and learned Gentleman opposite and my hon. Friend behind me seem to me to be conclusive arguments, not so much against the sub-section, as against the very expensive procedure which the Government have introduced into other parts of the Bill. If any change should be introduced into this sub-section, it should rather be, in my opinion, to limit the price which the Sanitary Authority should be permitted to pay for land to something like the agricultural value. But I really think that the arguments which have been adduced are much more forcible in the direction of altering the procedure, which alteration I hope, from the words of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board, the Government intend to adopt in the 3rd clause which follows.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): On the previous section both the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) pointed out that if we tied the hands of the Sanitary Authority we should be degrading and debasing it, and that while we had a Local Sanitary Authority we ought to support its authority. Now, I think those words would bear repetition in this sub-section. I think in this sub-section we are laying it down to the Sanitary Authority that they should behave like ordinary business people, and we are putting into an Act of Parliament that they are not to deal with this Act unless they behave in a business-like manner and like reasonable people. I certainly think it is degrading and debasing the Sanitary Authority to lay down such regulations for them. Of course, if they are fit to manage the affairs of the ratepayers they will act in a business-like manner, and will not squander the money of those they represent in buying up allotments which will not pay. That is not the only objection I have to urge to the sub-section. Notwithstanding the compliment paid to the drafting of the sub-section on the opposite side of the House, I must say I find great fault with it practically. What will this sub-section do? Why, it will give ground for opposition, in the first place, on the Board itself. An opposition party will get up and will at once oppose the proposals which may be made—an opposition inside the Sanitary Board—and that opposition will have its statement of accounts to prove that the allotments it is proposed to acquire will not pay. I do not object to that; but I do object to putting something in the Act which will make the majority go to law with the minority. By retaining this unnecessary sub-section you are going to create an enormous amount of litigation. The sub-section provides that the Sanitary Authority shall be recouped the expenses of putting the Act in operation; but it is totally impossible that it can be proved that 40 or 50 pieces of land will pay. All they can do is to strike an average and see whether this land will pay generally. I mention this to show that immediately application is made for allotments, all these difficulties will be started, and therefore I say you should make the procedure as simple as you can and give the authorities as little ground as possible for raising objections.

MR. COBB: I have always said one thing to the labourers and artizans in my district—namely, that I propose to do what I can to get them the right of acquiring a small piece of land at a fair rent. But I have always been careful to tell them that they should not look at this from a charitable point of view; nor do they want it in that sense. I quite agree with what has been said as to the enormous expense which will be incurred under this Bill, if it remains in the shape in which it has been introduced by the Government. I will not, however, dwell upon that subject now, because it will come forward on a later portion of the Bill, and will then be more fully discussed. If you are to incur a heavy expense in this matter which is to be spread over the rent, you will make that rent so high that the labourer cannot afford to pay it. If these expenses are not to be included in the rent, I ask by whom they are to be paid? Are we going to transform the electorate into a body dependent on charity who are to have the rent of their land paid for them out of the rates? I should be ashamed to go to my constituents, and tell them that I have placed them in such a position as that. I have always thought that we were trying to raise the electorate, and endeavouring to make them more independent and therefore better satisfied with their condition.

Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): I think that the object which the Government has in view is one which everyone will approve. It is desirable for many reasons that the Bill should not throw any cost upon the rates for the sake of the ratepayer to begin with, and also for the sake of the labourers themselves; because if the first experiments made under the Bill should prove to be expensive, we may be quite sure that the principle will not have any extensive application. Therefore, I agree with the Government in the way they have proceeded in this sub-section. But I cannot help thinking that the 6th clause, although it does not cover the whole case, does really go as far as the Government should go in cases of this kind. It makes it obligatory on the Local Authority to fix the rents of allotments at such an amount "as may reasonably be expected to insure the Sanitary Authority against loss." I wish to point out that as the sub-section now stands it would be almost impossible for any Local Authority, if they were guided by technical considerations, by compulsion to acquire land, because you cannot declare before hand at what price you will obtain land, and therefore you cannot assure yourself that the land will be acquired at a price which will reasonably justify the Local Authority in their expectation of being recouped. That is one objection, but a much more serious objection is that you are dealing with an authority that at all events in its present position is likely to be very ready to take advantage of excuses for not doing their duty under this Bill. Therefore, I say you ought not to multiply these excuses unnecessarily, and I think if you were to leave this sub-section in the Bill it would be regarded as a reason for not putting the Act in force. I think if the right hon. Gentleman has regard to Clause 6 he may find it possible to dispense with this sub-section.

Mr. RITCHIE: The right hon. Gentleman knows perfectly well that it is no novel idea that Local Authorities should be restricted and controlled in their operations, in case those operations should involve obligations upon the rates; so that this clause is by no means to be regarded as casting discredit upon the Local Authorities. We have to exercise a considerable amount of control over the Local Authorities in dealing with the rates, and therefore I am sure the right hon. Gentleman will sympathize with us in our desire to provide that the Local Authorities should not take any steps which will involve an obligation on the rates. The right hon. Gentleman says that Clause 6 is sufficient for our purpose without this sub-section. I must say that I do not quite agree with the right hon. Gentleman in that. Clause 6 simply provides for the rent when the Local Authority has got possession of the land, but the clause we are now discussing is one which controls to some extent the acquisition of land, and it lays the necessity upon the Local Authorities as far as they reasonably can, to take proper precautions before acquiring land that the cost shall be recouped out of the rents as they receive them. If the right hon. Gentleman will look at Clause 6 he will see that Sub-section 4 contemplates that the Local Authority may acquire land which they may not be able to let at rents which will recoup them. The words are—

> "If at any time any allotment cannot be let in accordance with the provisions of this Act and the regulations, the same may be let to any person whatever at the best annual rent that can be obtained for the same."

My right hon. Friend will understand that the sub-section contemplates that under certain circumstances it is possible that some deficiency may have to be met out of the rates, so that Clause 6 does not provide safeguards that no portion of the cost will be thrown upon the rates, but on the contrary, that some portion of it may be thrown upon them. We have endeavoured to provide that Sub-section 4 will not be brought into operation if it can be avoided. On further consideration, I think the right hon. Gentleman will see that this clause does not require that the authorities should have anything more than a reasonable ground to believe that the cost will be recouped to them. Looking at the fact that by the clause we are discussing, we are taking every precaution we can that the carrying out of the Bill should not be a burden on the rates, I am afraid I cannot part with the sub section.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby): If this sub-section laid down clearly the principles on which the authorities should proceed, I think there would be no objection to it; but when you put a clause of this kind into an Act of Parliament you must remember that you subject the authority to the external action of other people. Now, assuming that a Local Authority is engaged in making a purchase of land under this sub-section anybody who objects to the proceeding—it might be the person from whom the land was taken, or some cantankerous ratepayer—may take action against the authority and restrain them in their proceeding. I am afraid that would be a serious matter, and I think it is worth the while of the Government to consider whether they ought not to enclose their principle in a form which would not be open to that objection. I shall be glad to hear the hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General say how this can be provided against.

Mr. RITCHIE: I wish to say on the part of the Government that although we cannot part with this sub-section we shall be glad to consider between this and Report, whether any modification can be made in the clause that will carry out the wishes of the Government, and at the same time meet the objections raised to the sub-section.

Mr. STAVELEY HILL: I think we must have something more than that. I do not think that the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman is quite sufficient.

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): It appears to me that the way in which this clause would operate is not only by allowing a cantankerous person to prevent the authority obtaining such land as may be necessary; it seems to me that you are putting in the hands of the landowner a weapon which will enable him to place an exorbitant price on the land, if he wants to prevent the Act being put in force. Now, if the right hon. Gentleman is going to consider how he can modify this clause, I earnestly hope that he will consider it with a view to this—namely, that you must not put into the hands of any single landowner a weapon which he may use to the disadvantage of a whole neighbourhood. I should not be disposed to oppose the clause if the right hon. Gentleman can prevent that, but we must have a clear understanding upon the point.

Mr. LLEWELLYN (Somerset, N.): Hon. Members will notice that under this Bill, all charges with respect to allotments are charges on the parish in the same way as the charges in the Sanitary Act are charges on the parish. Under the Sanitary Act it is competent to the Sanitary Authorities to appoint Parochial Committees to carry out the work Under the present Bill the same power exists. In any question affecting the parish and the money to be raised in the parish, the Sanitary Authority will appoint a Parochial Committee, and whatever is done in the way of expense will be considered very carefully by those Committees, and their proceedings will have to be submitted for approval to the Sanitary Authority.

Mr. BEADEL (Essex, Chelmsford): I wish to point out that allotments can only be acquired voluntarily or compulsorily. There can be no question that if agriculture is to remain in the position which it occupies at the present moment the compulsory powers of the Bill will never have to be put in force. Anyone holding land will only be too charmed under the circumstances to allow these allotments to be used, so that the holders of them may have the experience gained by the landowners, that at present the land is comparatively worthless for them to occupy. That is a fact, so far as the holding of land is concerned at the present time. Those hon. Members, therefore, who think there will be any great difficulty in the acquirement of allotments will perhaps allow the voluntary system to operate; but inasmuch as the Bill must contain something beyond that, it is necessary to take compulsory powers; and I think the Government have done all they possibly can in selecting the authority which shall be able to put those powers in operation. Hon. Gentlemen opposite seem to fear that the acquisition of land by compulsory purchase would involve a large expense, and, to a great extent, I agree in that opinion. I do not see how it is possible to put into force compulsory powers unless considerable expense is incurred. Whether those who support the demand for allotments are prepared to say that the difference between the fair value of property and the cost of acquiring that property against the will of the owner shall fall upon the rates, is a question to be determined hereafter, but that there will be expense is undoubted. For my part, I shall be glad to see allotments general throughout the country, although hon. Members will perhaps allow me to say, from experience gained privately and professionally, that in the rural districts allotments are not appreciated to the extent imagined.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member must confine his observations to the special Amendment before the Committee. The hon. Member is delivering a speech which would have been appropriate to the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. BEADEL: I, of course, bow to your ruling, Mr. Chairman. My observations were only made for the purpose of cooling down hon. Members opposite, and with the endeavour to show that the Government, in my judgment, have done everything they possibly can to enable a Bill to be passed which shall operate for the benefit of a portion of the community in whom we all feel a great interest.

Mr. COBB: I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board whether the Amendment, which he proposes to bring up on Report, would deal with the very vital point raised by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt)? If the ratepayer or other person is to have the right of taking legal proceedings to prevent the Sanitary Authority from purchasing land under this clause, I certainly think we shall do better to take the advice of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) and adhere to Clause 6.

Mr. RITCHIE: I wish it to be understood that what I said was that the Government would between now and Report consider the objection which had been raised to the sub-section, and see whether they could, consistently with the principle of the Bill, in any way meet the wishes of right hon. Gentlemen opposite.

Colonel HUGHES (Woolwich): Before this question is put, I should like to allude to one point which has not been mentioned by any hon. Member in the course of the discussion. It appears that the expenses in connection with these allotments are to include the purchase money. If the Sanitary Authority is to let the land so that the purchase money may be repayable in 13 or 15 years with interest by instalments, it follows that the labourer at the end of that time has purchased the ground out of the rent, and that he thereby makes a permanent endowment to the parish for the benefit of the general body of ratepayers. If that is the intention of the Government, it ought to be clearly stated. My own idea was that the Sanitary Authority was to purchase the land and let it at its agricultural value, not that the labourer was to endow the parish in the manner I have described.

Question put,

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 140; Noes 101: Majority 39.—(Div. List, No. 410.) [10.50 P.M.]

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 20, after the word "expenses," insert "except such expenses as are incurred in making roads used by the public."—(*Mr. Halley Stewart.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I beg to move the insertion after the word "roads" in the Amendment of the words "to be." As the Amendment stands without these words it will apply merely to existing roads.

The CHAIRMAN: I will put the Amendment in that form.

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 20, after "expenses," insert "except such expenses as are incurred in making roads to be used by the public."

Question, "That those words be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I should like to add one or two words to the clause, in order to carry out the suggestion conveyed in the speech of the hon. and gallant Member for Woolwich (Colonel Hughes) just before the recent Division. The hon. and gallant Gentleman pointed out what is an exceedingly important point to recollect—namely, that if the rent is to include the recouping of the capital outlay, you will impose on the labourer the duty of purchasing the fee-simple of the land, and making a present of it to the district. I think that the words "capital outlay," or some other words to the same effect, should be inserted here. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] If the Government are not disposed to agree to such an Amendment in this clause, it may be arranged hereafter.

Mr. SEALE-HAYNE (Devon, Ashburton): I desire to move the omission of the words "and where it is not practicable to acquire land suitable for allotments at such price or rent as aforesaid, nothing in this Act shall require the Sanitary Authority to acquire land for allotments." In the first sub-section of this clause it is said that the Sanitary Authority shall purchase or hire land for allotments. These words say the Sanitary Authority shall not have power——

Mr. RITCHIE: I accept the Amendment, which really only emphazises the first portion of the sub-section.

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 23, to leave out from "and where" to end of the clause.—(*Mr. Seale-Hayne.*)

Question, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause," put, and *negatived.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 3 (acquisition of land for purposes of this Act).

Mr. SEALE-HAYNE: I beg to move the omission of the words "by agreement," in line 27, and in moving this Amendment I must also refer to the next Amendment I have on the paper, which is to leave out the whole of the cumbrous process which is provided in this Bill for the purpose of acquiring land by compulsion. Sufficient has been said on both sides of the Committee with regard to the impracticability of that process. Of course, to apply in the first place to the Sanitary Authority, and the Sanitary Authority to apply to the Local Government Board, and the Local Government Board to apply to Parliament, and then after you have got Parliamentary powers to put in force the Lands Clauses Consolidation Act, is a most ingenious way of not doing the thing.

Mr. RITCHIE: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will allow me to interrupt him. This portion of Clause 3 applies to purchase by agreement, and not by compulsion—purchase by agreement from the persons who are under certain legal disabilities to sell.

Mr. SEALE-HAYNE: If I am in Order, I should like to explain that the effect of my Amendment would be to enable the Sanitary Authority, without applying to Parliament, or without applying to the Local Government Board, to put in force the Lands Clauses Consolidation Act.

Mr. RITCHIE: I am sure the hon. Gentleman is under a misapprehension.

Mr. SEALE-HAYNE: Then I ask leave to withdraw my Amendment.

Mr. STAVELEY HILL; I do not quite understand what the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board says in regard to this matter. The clause is pretty clear in itself. It is that where land is to be taken by agreement, then the Lands Clauses Consolidation Act, except the compulsory clauses, come into force.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Mr. SEALE-HAYNE: I beg to move the next Amendment which stands in my name. It is to leave out all the words from the word "Act," in line 3, page 2, to the end of Sub-section 5, to get rid at once of the cumbrous process of obtaining possession of land. Now, I know that some people may think that it is an invasion of the rights of property to take possession of land compulsorily, without going through the process of a Provisional Order. But surely if land is to be taken compulsorily, the simpler the process is the better it is for the landlord on the one side, and for those by whom the land is to be purchased on the other side. Now, it so happens that we do take land compulsorily in some instances, without going through the formality of applying for a Provisional Order. Take the case of the road surveyor, who, under the Highway Act of William IV., takes possession of land, and opens quarries, and pays nothing for it, except the market price of the stone. That is done without any application for a Provisional Order, but simply by an application to two Justices. I cannot see why a Rural and Urban Sanitary Authority should not be entrusted with the duty of putting into force the Lands Clauses Consolidation Act, and obtaining land by compulsion for allotments.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member proposes to omit Sub-sections 2, 3, 4, and 5?

Mr. SEALE-HAYNE: Yes.

Amendment proposed, in page 2, to omit Sub-sections 2, 3, 4, and 5.—(*Mr. Seale-Hayne.*)

Question proposed, "That the words if a sanitary authority are' stand part of the Clause."

Mr. RITCHIE: So far as I understand it, the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Seale-Hayne) raises the whole question of the machinery under which, what are called, compulsory powers are to be obtained by Local Authorities in cases where land cannot be acquired for the purposes of this Bill by voluntary agreement. The hon. Gentleman says that the provisions in this Bill are provisions which are not rendered necessary with reference to the taking of land for certain purposes, and, as an illustration, he said that a road surveyor could obtain powers to get material out of land by simply applying to two Justices. That is so, no doubt; but the circumstances in cases of this kind are peculiar. The land is not to be taken for any purpose, is not to be put to any use, except the taking out of it a material for the purpose of road making. But, so far as I know, there is no power giving under any Act of Parliament by which any Public Body, any Body however public their requirements may be, can obtain land against the will of the possessor of that land without coming to Parliament by means of a Private Bill or a Provisional Order.

Mr. SEALE-HAYNE: I mentioned the case of the road surveyor.

Mr. RITCHIE: I have said that it is an exceptional case, meant for exceptional circumstances, and cannot apply to the taking of land for such purposes as those contemplated by this Bill. Now, is there any public reason why a different process should be set up in this Bill for the purpose of taking land against the will of the owners to provide allotments? Is there any reason why land for this purpose should be taken in any other way than land taken for any public purpose under the Public Health Act?

Mr. SEALE-HAYNE: Yes.

Mr. RITCHIE: No doubt, the hon. Gentleman will inform us what are the circumstances under which he thinks that land ought to be taken in a different way, and what are the reasons why it should be taken. Why, even in the case of an area in the Metropolis, which is not a sanitary area, where a landlord may be fairly assumed to have neglected the duty which devolves upon him of making proper provision for the health of his tenants, Parliament has not allowed land to be taken by a Public Authority, without coming for the sanction of Parliament for that purpose. I know of no purposes whatever myself, amongst the many purposes for which land is to be acquired by Local Authorities throughout the country, for which it can be taken by Local Authorities without coming to Parliament by means of a Provisional Order. A great deal has been said about the matter of procedure under the Public Health Act, and it has been stated by more than one speaker that it is a cumbrous and unwieldy mode of procedure. Now, Sir, let us consider for a moment what is the method by which Sanitary Authorities have to obtain land under the Public Health Act. They have to give proper notices to those from whom they desire to take land; and I imagine that nobody, however extreme their views may be upon this subject, desire to take land from an owner without giving him proper notice that they desire to take his land. Very well. Then an application is to be made to the Local Government Board for a Provisional Order. What do the Local Government Board do? They send down a gentleman to hold an inquiry, and surely it is admitted on all hands that it is desirable that an inquiry should be held, so that all the parties who were interested—not only the owners, not only those have an actual *locus standi*, but all those who are interested in the community at large—should have an opportunity of laying before the Inspector of the Local Government Board the reasons they may desire to advance why the land should not be taken as proposed by the authorities. After the Inspector of the Local Government Board has held an inquiry, he makes his report to the Local Government Board, and, according to the result of that inquiry, the Local Government Board either withhold or grant a Provisional Order. Well, now the point which is more particularly objected to, so far as I can gather, looking through the Amendments upon the Paper, is the proceeding subsequent to the granting of the Provisional Order. I understand that most of those who object to coming to Parliament for a Confirming Bill, would not object to coming to the Local Government Board for a Provisional Order. So far as we have gone, I take it that the mode of proceeding is one that is not greatly objected to even by hon. Gentlemen opposite. Their main contention is that, on the issuing of the Provisional Order by the Local Government Board, all the negotiations, so far as the taking of land is concerned, should come to an end—that the process should come to an end.

MR. SEALE-HAYNE: I am sorry to interrupt the right hon. Gentleman, but it is the cost of obtaining the Provisional Order which I should like him to deal with.

MR. RITCHIE: So far as the obtaining of the Provisional Order is concerned, the cost is almost *nil.* [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] I am speaking about the Provisional Order. The cost is almost *nil,* and it is almost entirely confined to the cost of the advertisements; and, so far as I understand, the hon. Gentleman would not go to the length of saying that full and due public notice ought not to be given by the Local Authority who desires to acquire land by that process. So far as the cost of obtaining a Provisional Order is concerned, there is no cost other than that which the hon. Gentleman would, I am sure, be willing to incur. But the hon. Gentleman says there is the cost of coming to Parliament, which is so great.

MR. SEALE-HAYNE: The inquiry.

MR. RITCHIE: The cost of the inquiry. No charge is made for the services of the Inspector, although I think there ought to be. No charge is made at present for the services of the Inspector holding the inquiry, and no charge will be made under this Bill as the law stands at present. Then there comes the confirmation by Parliament. Upon this point I maintain it is an entirely novel principle if you take away land from individuals who are unwilling to part with it without Parliamentary powers. The mode of obtaining the consent of Parliament by Provisional Order is the most speedy and least costly of all modes. The Local Government Board include a Provisional Order in a Confirming Bill which they present to Parliament, and if that is not opposed, no expense whatever is incurred by the locality. What is the case if the Bill is opposed? I have already stated more than once in this House, as showing the non-expensive character of this mode of proceeding, that of 110 Confirming Bills which were presented by the Local Government Board to Parliament during the last five years, 108 were confirmed without any opposition whatever—only upon two occasions during the last five years have Confirming Bills including Provisional Orders for the acquiring of land been opposed. Why is this? It is because the inquiry of the Local Government Board by means of their Inspector really dissipates all the opposition which, if there were no inquiry, would expend itself before a Committee of the House of Commons. Both the landlord and the Public Authority who desire to acquire land are satisfied with the opportunity they have of presenting to an independent tribunal the whole of their reasons for or against the powers which the Local Authority desire to obtain, and I have no doubt whatever such would be the case in this particular instance. We must not exclude from view the possibility that in one or two exceptional cases there may be expenses incurred; but I think I am right in saying that experience shows that no expenses whatever will be incurred in the obtaining of compulsory powers. It may be said that the cost of the machinery for settling the compensation is considerable, and that the compensation which is usually paid under these circumstances is also excessive. Well, no doubt the machinery of the Lands Clauses Consolidation Act is not so simple a machinery as we would desire for the purposes of this Bill. It is a machinery which is a valuable and effectual machinery for the great mass of cases which have to be dealt with under the Act; but I acknowledge I should be very glad if we could find some simpler method and some less expensive plan of assessing the compensation under this Bill, for it is evident that the machinery, which may be very good and effective for the large purposes for which it was passed, may be too large and cumbrous and costly for the acquisition of land under such circumstances as are contemplated by this Bill. We have, however, contented ourselves, as I think we are bound to do, with adopting the machiney which was to hand, and which, so far as I know, is the only machinery at present in existence. But, if there could be some method by which it should be obligatory upon the landowner or Local Authority to refer to an arbitrator the question of what shall be the price for a particular piece of land, I am bound to say that very probably that would be less costly and more effectual machinery. I am prepared to undertake to the House that we will consider between now and the further stage of this Bill whether we can suggest to the Committee, or to the House, any more economical machinery by which the compensation can be assessed. I think, that perhaps in a case where the Local Authorities and the landowner cannot agree upon an umpire, the Local Government Board might be empowered to appoint a valuer and also to fix the remuneration. Well, now, some hon. Gentlemen have proposed the County Court Judge as being a better Tribunal than the one which is set up under the Lands Clauses Consolidation Act; but I doubt very much whether that machinery would be better or would be any cheaper than the machinery provided under the Lands Clauses Consolidation Act, because the County Court Judge cannot be supposed, by virtue of his office, to have an accurate knowledge of the value of the land throughout the district, and therefore it should be in the power of either of the two parties to the transaction to insist upon an assessor being brought in to assist the County Court Judge in the fixing of the value. There is nothing, so far as I can see, which would prevent solicitors or counsel being appointed on either side to lay their cases before the County Court Judge, and if this machinery were to be put into operation, I do not for the life of me see how it can be expected to be any cheaper than the machinery which is set up by the Lands Clauses Consolidation Act. With reference to the question of compensation, I know it has been said, that in many cases under the Lands Clauses Consolidation Act, an arbitrator and jury have given compensation considerably over what is the ordinary market value of the property which has been taken. But I am told, on the other hand, that that is by no means always the case, and that, in very many cases, the amount which has been fixed under that Act has been a fair and proper and legitimate sum. I can quite understand, however, that in many of the cases which come for settlement under that Act, there may be a very large number of complications in connection with the purchase of the land which must inevitably run up the costs. The question of building or of trade claims, and many other matters of that kind, come in and undoubtedly give great scope for the fixing of an amount very much above the actual value. But that cannot arise in cases of this kind. Nothing can possibly be simpler than the valuation of a piece of agricultural land—nothing can be simpler than the assessing the compensation in a case where there are few, if any, interests other than the value of the land which is to be sold. I cannot think there is any reason why a landowner whose land is to be taken from him under this Bill should be treated in a different way from any other person whose land may be required for any other purpose. Therefore, I cannot lead the Committee to hope that we shall depart from the machinery by which the land can be obtained—namely, a Provisional Order made by Parliament—but we will consider whether some more easy and expeditious and economical mode cannot be suggested. I want the Committee to understand that this question of the mode in which the land should be acquired we regard as a vital portion of the scheme; and we cannot consent to be responsible for any measure which will enable any Sanitary Authority to take land away from a man unwilling to part with it without coming to Parliament for powers, which should be given in all circumstances that can be conceived at the present time. The exception the hon. Member has mentioned has proved nothing whatever, and if that be the only illustration the hon. Gentleman can give, that conclusively proves the justice of my view.

Mr. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): In the Labourers (Ireland) Act of 1883 we had all the cumbrous procedure of the Provisional Order, which had to be confirmed by Parliament. We had another Labourers Act in 1885, in which Act Parliament deliberately departed from that system, and provided that a Provisional Order in which land was taken for the labourers in Ireland—a precisely parallel case to that of the present Bill—should confirm itself, unless within a limited period—I think of two months—a petition was presented against it. If no petition was presented against it, however, within two months, still it had to come before Parliament, because in such cases it went before the Privy Council, who had power to hear the matter, and the Provisional Order had the same effect as if it had been confirmed by Parliament. In the case of this Bill, several years after that procedure had started working, the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board comes down here and says he knows of no analogous case where land can be taken compulsorily without Act of Parliament. He goes back from the procedure of 1885 to that of 1883, which has been abandoned clearly and completely by Parliament. I cannot congratulate the right hon. Gentleman on his position. His Party has been getting educated, no doubt; but he does not seem to have made much advance in the matter. He has gone back in the case of England on that which Parliament condemned, so far as Ireland was concerned, in 1885.

MR. STAVELEY HILL: When the matter of taking land has once come before the Court appointed by the Land Clauses Act, there is no procedure of which you could complain. There is nothing of which I complain in any shape or way if land is to be taken, and the value has to be ascertained. It can be ascertained either by a jury, or by an arbitrator; and I cannot conceive any process that is better adapted for this purpose than that which has been found to work so well in the Act of 1845. But I have to complain of the bringing into operation of the 176th section of the Public Health Act of 1875, because that is a clause which enacts a system, as the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down has said with regard to the Irish Labourers Act, which is utterly unsuited to the matter dealt with in this Bill. Where we are going to take land for such a public purpose as the sewage of a town, or for a railway, or any other public requirement of that nature, it is quite right that all notices should be given in a complicated manner, dealing, in all probability, with several properties, and dealing with questions as to whether the matter will be of real public benefit or not. It is quite right that notices should be given, such as those required by the Public Health Act. But for what earthly purpose, when it is known that the matter in hand is not whether or not the Sanitary Board is right in having said there is a requirement for allotments, and that these allotment cannot be entertained—why on earth should we go through a process of having all these advertisements and arrangements which the right hon. Gentleman says would be necessary in connection with such an inquiry? I was interested personally in a small matter relating to the acquisition of land, where the costs came to £600. The matter was one which really did not involve much more than would be involved under this Bill as affecting an allotment of land. If you are to be put to a cost of £300 in order to procure allotment land of five acres, the result will be to smash up the whole thing. It is to that I refer. It is to the expense under the provisions of the Public Health Act that one objects to, and not to the expense under the Lands Clauses Consolidation Act. I do most earnestly entreat the right hon. Gentleman, if he means to make this Bill a success, to alter that part of the clause. If it remains as it is, we shall simply go to our constituencies as having put upon them some fraud or sham measure, which will not do what we profess it shall do.

MR. JESSE COLLINGS: I certainly think that all necessary notice should be given in cases of compulsory purchase. We do not desire to spring a mine upon anyone, and the giving of a notice does not constitute an expense. I certainly was surprised to hear the right hon. Gentleman opposite talk of the Lands Clauses Act as entailing little or no expense. I can assure the right hon. Gentleman that we went through a painful experience in Birmingham under that Act, when we went to an expense of about £1,500,000 for the purchase of land. Certainly, had we known what the operation of the Lands Clauses Act was going to be, that enterprise or undertaking would never have been entered into. I cannot, therefore, adopt the contention that is set forth. I think that the only thing hon. Members opposite want to secure is that a fair price should be given for the land. Well, I incline to think that the offer which the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board has given, though a new one, is a very effective one and a cheap one. If instead of going to this expense when the seller and buyer cannot agree on the price, I understood the right hon. Gentleman to say that the Local Government Board will send down a man to arrange the matter without any jury at all, and I take it that the expense by this arrangement would be very little and the rent would be fixed so that the parties would know what had to be paid.

Mr. RITCHIE: What I suggested was this, that if the buyer and seller were mutually to agree upon some person to fix the price, then the Local Government Board, of course, need not step in, but if they could not agree then I think they should have to apply to the Local Government Board, who would appoint a man to say what the price should be, and the Local Government Board should fix that person's remuneration.

Mr. JESSE COLLINGS: That is better than I conceived it to be. The buyer and the seller would each fix his price, and the Local Government man would come in as a sort of umpire. I am quite aware that if the County Court Judge has to appoint assessors to assist him, and to argue the question, the expenses will run up until they become almost as heavy as they would be under the Lands Clauses Act, though anyone who knows the working of that Act must be aware that it is most mysterious how the costs under that Act run up to the extent to which they do. Even supposing that the Amendments with regard to County Court Judges are accepted, I can see that the method of procedure would not be so free from expense to the Sanitary Authority and to all concerned as the proposition of the right hon. Gentleman. The proposal is a new one, but it is well worthy of the consideration of hon. Members on this side of the House. I feel sure that up to now, of all the propositions which have been made, this is the cheapest and the one likely to involve the least expense to all parties.

Mr. H. GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden): I do not wish to occupy the time of the Committee unduly, because I see that there are a great many Amendments on the Paper. Though I take great interest in this Bill, I have purposely abstained from speaking on many Amendments in which I take great interest, because I was anxious to see progress made. I should like to say, however, on this occasion, why I support the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman opposite. It has been fully admitted by the Committee that the machinery of this Bill is of a very cumbrous nature. The fact is, that hon. Gentlemen opposite have put the cart before the horse, and have endeavoured to bring in an Allotments Bill before they have brought in a County Government Bill. That is generally admitted by the House, and I do not think the reason for it is far to seek—in fact, it has been acknowledged in some of the Tory papers. There is one point that the right hon. Gentleman has not fairly put before the House. He has dwelt on the question as to the expense which this compulsory machinery would incur. I will not detain the Committee by following that argument, because I think it has been fully discussed by other speakers before me; but the right hon. Gentleman, though he has met the question of the expense of money, has not met the question of the expenditure of time, and I think it must be evident to everyone that under the very cumbrous machinery of this Bill, the time that will elapse, and the labour that will be involved, in arranging these allotments will be enormous. It will take a labourer who wants an allotment probably two years before he can enter upon it for occupation, if he has an unreasonable landlord to deal with. It is for this reason that I shall vote for the hon. Member behind me if he goes to a Division.

Mr. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): I think our discussion is now taking a practical shape. At first it took the form of the negation of the procedure for carrying out the purposes of this Bill which the Government had placed on the Paper. The right hon. Gentleman said he would prefer not to bring in new principles of procedure, but to use the machinery at hand and in existence. I wish to draw his attention to an Amendment which I have on the Paper, and which I think will meet many of the objects he has in view. I certainly agree with him that it would be a very strong measure to take lands from anyone without having recourse to

Parliament, and the Amendment which I have placed upon the Paper, but which is printed in a form in which I am not going to move it, will, I think, exactly express, or very nearly express, the intention the Government has declared through the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board. My Amendment, as printed on the Paper, is as follows:—

> Clause 3, page 2, line 9, leave out all after "may" and insert "subject to the provisions of this Act, purchase compulsorily any lands suitable for the purposes of this Act, whether within or without their district, and such authority shall have all the powers and be subject to all the conditions prescribed for local authorities by 'The Public Health Act, 1875.' sections one hundred and seventy-six, two hundred and ninety-six and two hundred and ninety-seven, and the said section shall for all purposes be incorporated with this Act. The price of all lands purchased under this Act compulsorily shall be decided by the county court judge of the district within which the lands, or the greater part thereof in value, are situate, on the application of the Sanitary Authority, and shall be of such a sum as shall, in the opinion of the county court judge, be the fair market value of such lands, without any addition being made for compulsory purchase."

I propose in the 10th line to leave out—

> "By the county court judge of the district within which the lands or the greater part thereof in value, are situate,"

and I propose to insert in place of these words "by an arbitrator to be appointed by the Local Government Board." That is an Amendment I placed in the hands of the officers of the House this afternoon, before the House went into Committee on this Bill, and I think it exactly expresses the object which, very much to my satisfaction, the right hon. Gentleman announced some little time ago. I will not detain the Committee by going into a general discussion at the present time; but I would simply point out to the right hon. Gentleman and to others acquainted with the subject, that the effect of my Amendment with the alteration I have explained—that is to say, if an arbitrator is appointed by the Local Government Board—will apply to this very difficult question the procedure of the Artizans' Dwellings Acts as a modification of the procedure suggested as the first instance by the Government. Those who are familiar with the evidence given before the Commission appointed to inquire into the housing of the working classes in 1885, will remember the very remarkable evidence given by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain), in which he drew attention to the enormous difference there was in the matter of taking land under the Artizans' Dwellings Acts and the Lands Clauses Consolidation Act. I wish at this stage to draw the attention of the right hon. Gentleman to the fact that this Amendment was placed on the Paper this afternoon, and that except as regards the point raised in the last few lines, exactly carries out the object he has expressed.

Colonel HUGHES (Woolwich): The matter immediately before the Committee is not as to the expenses to be incurred after the Provisional Order is obtained; but as to the expenses to be incurred in the obtaining of the Provisional Order itself. ["No, no!"] Well, the clauses that are proposed to be admitted are clauses relating to the obtaining of the Provisional Order first of all by a County Authority, and then getting it confirmed by Parliament through the action of the Local Government Board. I can say as to the Provisional Orders obtained through the Local Government Board that the expense is very trifling indeed, and therefore if you can, under the Lands Clauses Act, use that mode of obtaining a Provisional Order it is to my knowledge the easiest and cheapest way of proceeding. The county inquiry would cost nothing except for the advertisement. The expenses begin undoubtedly after the Provisional Order is obtained, and you come to acquire the property. It would be well with regard to that to discuss whether the County Court Judge should not act as an arbitrator, instead of his acting as it is now proposed he should do. As to obtaining Provisional Orders, I can assure the right hon. Gentleman that the procedure is both simple and inexpensive.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir Richard Webster) (Isle of Wight): This discussion has broken up into two branches, first as to the expense of the Provisional Order, and next as to the expense of conducting investigations. It is necessary to deal with these two parts of the question separately. I would point out with regard to the obtaining of a Provisional Order, that hon. Members opposite take a view different from that which we take as to the difficulty and delay involved in the process of obtaining such an order. There is no difficulty in obtaining a Provisional Order in a single Session.

MR. STAVELEY HILL: It may take 18 months.

SIR RICHARD WEBSTER: I am dealing with the ordinary normal condition of things. I am speaking of an ordinary Provisional Order, and I will undertake to say that in 999 cases out of 1,000 nothing like 18 months would elapse before it could be obtained. In the vast majority of these cases the Provisional Order would be unopposed, and therefore, in considering this matter, we ought to apply the measure of time which we find is consumed in obtaining the ordinary unopposed Provisional Order. I maintain that, under these circumstances, there will be no difficulty in obtaining a Provisional Order by the month of March. The hon. and learned Gentleman behind me (Mr. Staveley Hill) has spoken of the expense of obtaining the Provisional Order in a certain case to which he referred. Well, he did not tell us what the circumstances of that particular case were. He did not tell us what was the question involved.

MR. STAVELEY HILL: Sewage.

SIR RICHARD WEBSTER: If it was a sewage question, I can quite understand a large expenditure being involved, because sewage matters very often involve most difficult questions.

MR. STAVELEY HILL: The question was one of the simplest character—namely, which of two sets of lands should be taken.

SIR RICHARD WEBSTER: Well, the proposition the hon. and learned Gentleman now states—namely, which of two sets of land should be taken, would not seem to arise out of a question of sewage, or, rather, would seem to involve the difficulties which an ordinary question of sewage might entail. It is almost unprecedented that the simple question of taking a piece of land for local purposes would involve an inquiry which would cost anything like the amount the hon. and learned Gentleman stated. I will tell the Committee why I speak with authority on this matter. I have had to deal with questions of this kind all over the Kingdom, and I can say hat it is only when there are contested questions—where questions of nuisance arise—where, for instance, a neighbourhood objects to have a sewage farm brought down by a neighbouring Local Authority to its doors, or where a water supply is going to be taken or injuriously affected, that great opposition arises. The hon. Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham (Mr. Jesse Collings) said it would be unfair if the usual statutory notice was not given. Well, that would involve the outlay of a very few pounds. The Local Government Board make no charge for the Inspector who goes down; and so far as the cost of the Provisional Order is concerned, it is only necessary to spend a small amount—under £100 I should think would be ample in most cases. In the case of opposed Orders, as the hon. Member opposite has stated, no doubt it would be quite possible in an exceptional instance, where you may have some great contest as to whether or not a particular piece of land is to be taken, considerable expense might be involved. But that is not the class of case we should have under ordinary circumstances to contemplate under this Bill. I can scarcely conceive there being opposition to a Provisional Order under this Bill, unless the Guardians or Local Authority have wholly mistaken their duty in the case. It would be an extraordinary proposition to lay down that land is to be taken without statutory authority, and I must join issue with the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division on this matter. I have some knowledge of the case he referred to, with regard to which he stated that the town of Birmingham was put to an enormous expense. But that was a case in which a magnificent street was run through Birmingham, and hundreds of thousands of pounds were involved in the acquisition of land. That kind of case bears no parallel to the acquisition of five, 10, or 15 acres of land in a small country district, or in a district adjoining a town, for labourers' allotments. Dealing with the taking of a few acres of agricultural land, I can confirm the opinion of my hon. and learned Friend who sits behind me, that the expense, under the circumstances, will not be increased by the procedure under the Lands Clauses Act. The procedure is, undoubtedly, very simple indeed. Where heavy expense is involved is where such matters are introduced as have been referred to by hon. Members, or where arbitrators are chosen, one on one side and one on another, and where an umpire is appointed to decide between them. The machinery of the Lands Clauses Act being adopted, which provides for notices of a simple character being given—machinery which has been working for 40 years without any amendment at all—to that it is suggested by the hon. Gentleman opposite to add a provision to the effect that where the tribunal fails to agree an umpire shall be appointed by the Local Government Board. That seems to me to be about the simplest possible procedure we could conceive. The Committee are perfectly aware that under the Lands Clauses Act there may be a jury. Well, I do not deny that under certain exceptional cases there have been high verdicts given; but it must be borne in mind that any extraordinary miscarriage of justice that occurs makes a great deal more noise than a whole series of decisions where there has been no such miscarriage. However objectionable one or two verdicts may have been, there have been large numbers with which no fault could be found. I say this, and there are plenty of Members in the House who will confirm me, that these cases do not arise with reference to the purchase and sale of agricultural land. They arise in connection with land which is supposed to have some extraordinary value, or where, as has already been stated, some controversial issue has been raised. It is where there are elements of doubt and difficulty and uncertainty in the case that there is a probability of large expenditure being involved, and cases of that kind we should find it difficult to understand unless we knew the whole circumstances. When you are dealing with agricultural land and are obliged to have a jury or an arbitrator, I do not think that the verdicts of the juries or the awards of the arbitrators have been excessive, or have allowed too high prices for the land. Looking at the returns of awards, you will be surprised to find, if you eliminate certain circumstances, that the prices given have been very little more than the market value. I say that because I do not want the Committee to think that, because they are adopting the machinery of the Lands Clauses Consolidation Act which apply to land, they are in any way involving the Local Authority of necessity in any unfair expense. If we are are going to make this Bill workable, we should, as far as possible, adopt the existing system, unless it is to work an injustice. The question of the County Court Judge has been given up, and the hon. Gentleman has himself said he is prepared to have one arbitrator instead; and, therefore, it comes back to this. I trust the Committee will come to the conclusion there ought to be, in justice and fairness, control equivalent to Parliamentary power. If that be so, you cannot have anything cheaper or more ready to your hand than this system of Provisional Orders, which, at any rate in England, has been done at comparatively small expense. I only desire to say one word with regard to the observation of the hon. Gentleman the Member for South Kilkenny. His observation was that the Privy Council in Ireland made the Order——

MR. CHANCE: No; what I said was that the Order was self-acting, and, unless objected to in a limited period, confirmed itself without any special confirmation by a Bill.

SIR RICHARD WEBSTER: But then it was provided that if there was was no arbitration the Privy Council in Ireland was substituted. I do not think anyone would rise in this House and say it would be desirable to make the Privy Council an umpire. I am sure we only desire to make this Bill a practical Bill, and we shall do that more easily by adapting to the existing machinery some mode of assessment which will avoid greater expense; therefore, I submit, if the view suggested by my right hon. Friend is followed out, there is no doubt it would practically reconcile all the grievances presented.

MR. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.): The Attorney General recommends the re-adjustment of the machinery by which the amount to be paid would be computed; and the question I should like to ask him upon that is this—whether under the new tribunal, or the new procedure, which the President of the Local Government Board suggests, the Local Authority will have to pay the extra 10 per cent compensation for compulsory sale, and the 15 per cent for compulsion and severance put together, which has to be paid under the Lands Clauses Consolidation Act under ordinary circumstances?

In his evidence before the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) said in some cases the extra expense had amounted to 33 per cent. Will that sort of extra price have to be paid, or only a fair price as between a willing vendor and a willing purchaser?

MR. RITCHIE: I may say at once there is no section whatever in the Lands Clauses Consolidation Act which has entailed any obligation upon any tribunal having to assess compensation to award 10 per cent, or any other percentage, for compulsory sale.

MR. LAWSON: It has been so construed in practice.

MR. RITCHIE: I believe the hon. Gentleman is right, that it is the practice in assessing compensation to allow 10 per cent for compulsory sale. What would be the effect, whether or not an arbitrator, when appointed in the way I propose, would feel himself compelled to give anything of that kind, it is not for me to say; but there is no obligation upon him to do so. I will read to the Committee the clause which I propose to introduce. I propose, after Clause 3, page 2, line 32, to insert the following:—

> "Provided that any question of disputed compensation, where the amount claimed or offered exceeds £50, shall not be referred to arbitrators or a jury as provided by 'The Lands Clauses Consolidation Act, 1845,' and the Acts amending the same, but shall be referred to the arbitration of a single arbitrator appointed by the parties, or if the parties do not concur in the appointment of a single arbitrator, then it should be referred, on the application of either of them, by the Local Government Board."

The next section provides for the death of the arbitrator—

> "If an arbitrator appointed for the purposes of this Act dies, or becomes incapable to act before he has made his award, or fails to make his award within two months after he is appointed, his appointment shall determine, and the determination of the compensation shall be referred to another arbitrator appointed in like manner as if no arbitrator had been previously appointed."

And then we state—

> "An arbitration appointed under this section shall be deemed to be an arbitration within the meaning of 'The Lands Clauses Consolidation Act, 1845,' and the Acts amending the same, and the provisions of those Acts with respect to an arbitration shall apply accordingly."

MR. LAWSON: I must point out to the right hon. Gentleman that of course it stands to reason, and must be obvious to his common sense, that the arbitrator would be guided by the precedents set and the rules established in Court, and would undoubtedly follow the practice pursued under the Lands Clauses Consolidation Act up to the present time.

SIR RICHARD WEBSTER: There is no rule in the matter, but undoubtedly it has been the practice. I think, however, we ought certainly to deal with this question when we come to discuss it.

VISCOUNT WOLMER (Hants, Petersfield): I would like to ask the Attorney General a question upon a point which he did not touch upon in his interesting statement. I do not wish to appear hypercritical; still, it is the desire of the Committee to stop up all possible loopholes, and therefore I would like to ask this question. The hon. and learned Gentleman has expressed the opinion that most of the Provisional Orders are unopposed, and the expense slight; he has also dealt with the case of Provisional Orders which were opposed but succeeded, and I would like to ask him for an explanation with regard to Provisional Orders that are opposed and thrown out. Supposing a Provisional Order is thrown out, and considerable expense is incurred, that afterwards another scheme is set on foot and successfully carried through, will the allotment tenants under the new scheme have to pay such rents as to cover the actual cost incurred by the Order as well as the cost of the Order that was not carried through? I would like the hon. and learned Gentleman to answer that question.

SIR RICHARD WEBSTER: As I understand the scheme of this Bill, I should say that certainly of the two schemes referred to by the hon. Member, that the cost of the first scheme which was abortive would not be taken into account. Assume that in the year 1888 an application is made for a Provisional Order; that is opposed and fails, the result of which is that an expense of £400 is incurred. That expense is borne for the time being by the Local Authority out of the rates. Then, in 1890, two years later, there is a successful scheme made which is approved on its own merits, in my judgment there would be no direction to take into consideration in the price to be fixed or given for the land, or in the price for the letting or the rent to be fixed, any money which has been unfortunately wasted or thrown away by the first scheme. I hope I have answered the question satisfactorily.

MR. SEALE-HAYNE (Devon, Ashburton): I should like to take the opportunity of replying, in as few words as possible, to what has fallen from the President of the Local Government Board and the learned Attorney General, because I am sure they are unintentionally misleading the Committee in this matter. It so happens that I have been for a long time Chairman of Local Bodies who have to apply for Provisional Orders, and I do not remember any that cost less than from £200 to £300, and many of them from £500 to £600.

SIR RICHARD WEBSTER: For what purpose?

MR. SEALE-HAYNE: For the purpose of taking land; but I should have to go into a very long story if I explained the circumstances of each case.

SIR RICHARD WEBSTER: Will the hon. Gentleman allow me to remind him that the whole question is for what purpose the land is taken, and the questions of compensation that are raised?

MR. SEALE-HAYNE: I will take him at his own words. He spoke of an unopposed Order costing £100; apply that to the purchase of three acres of land, the value of which may not be more than £100 or £150, and if you have to pay £100 for an unopposed Order the cost will be prohibitory. I do not see the use of coming to Parliament for an unopposed Order; the land might as well be taken by agreement on both sides. To get an unopposed Order seems to me to be a waste of money.

SIR RICHARD WEBSTER: I never suggested it would cost £100—I said under no circumstances could I contemplate it costing so much as £100.

MR. SEALE-HAYNE: I should like the hon. and learned Gentleman to name any Provisional Order that has cost less than £100. In the case of an unopposed Provisional Order I say that the land might just as well be taken by agreement, as the coming up to London to obtain the Provisional Order is expensive even when unopposed, and if opposed, costs as much as an Act of Parliament; and, consequently, the means provided by this Bill is a means that is not at all applicable to the purpose we have in hand, which is to take land as cheaply as possible. It is desirable to take it cheaply, because if a landlord has any ground of complaint he ought to be able to argue and defend his case in a cheap manner; whereas, if he is to appear first before the Sanitary Authority, then to appear again before the County Authority, then to appear again before the Local Government Board, and then, perhaps, to run the gauntlet of opposing the Provisional Order before Parliament, and after that to fight the Local Authorities under the Land Clauses Consolidation Act in order to save his rights, of course it would cost him a tremendous bill. On the other hand, in such a case a large portion of the bill thus incurred would fall on the Local Sanitary Authority, and those who took the allotments would have to pay an increased rent proportionate to the increased cost of the land. In an unopposed case the cost would consist, at least, of making a plan, of serving notices, of the applications to the Local Government Board, and of the local solicitor, whose bill alone, to say nothing of the fees you would have to pay in London and the costs of the Parliamentary agents, would always amount to at least £100. Therefore, I sincerely trust that whatever re-arrangement the Government may make of this clause—and I admit they propose to adopt a more simple process, and a cheaper process, of obtaining land than that proposed in the Bill as introduced—they will get rid of that old-fashioned idea, that in order to take two or three acres of land compulsorily it is necessary to apply to Parliament for compulsory powers.

MR. CHANCE: I understand the clause of the right hon. Gentleman is this—that instead of having arbitrators as you now have you are to have an umpire—["No, no!"]—well, a single arbitrator, which is the same thing. I do not know whether it is intended to allow the parties to traverse the award and go to a jury. ["No, no!"] Well, there is nothing in the proposed new clause about it. There is another point worth considering now that we are on the question of the compulsory powers the new authority are to have, and I observe the compulsory powers they are to have are powers to purchase out and out. But when I turn to the Labourers (Ireland) Act—which will be found a mine of wealth on this subject, and I advise hon. and right hon. Gentlemen to read it—and turn to Section 4 of the Act of 1885, I find the Local Authority has not only power to purchase land out and out, but power to compulsorily acquire land for a term of years at a reasonable rent. It appears to me that is a very beneficial clause, because, first of all, it enables a Local Authority to try what they can do, and if they find the labourers cannot be had they can hand back the land. Another point is that when you purchase the land out and out you have to investigate the title, which is sometimes a difficult thing to do; but when you take a lease of the land you only put down the year's rent and not the ready money for the land in bulk; and therefore the cost of investigating the title is practically done away with altogether. This is a provision that has largely reduced the cost of these labourers' allotments dwellings, and I should like to hear some reason why they omitted from this Bill this very necessary and sensible power to lease land.

Sir RICHARD WEBSTER: I will deal with the points that have been mentioned by the hon. Gentleman. First, with regard to the appeal to a jury. Unfortunately there was a provision inserted in the Artizans' Dwellings Act to enable you to challenge the finding of an arbitrator by a jury; but there is no machinery in the Lands Clauses Act to enable you to take an award before a jury, and therefore the particular state of things he has referred to cannot arise. With regard to the point in respect of rent-charge, that is a matter worthy of consideration; but it is a fresh point. I may now be allowed to say that I have made inquiry, and my right hon. Friend the President of the Local Government Board has made inquiry, and we are informed that, in cases of an unopposed Provisional Order, the cost in ordinary cases would not be more than £25, and I may also say that large numbers are passed through the House year by year where the cost does not exceed that amount.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby): I would urge on the Government the consideration of the suggestion made by the hon. Member with reference to the leasing of land; I think that is the most valuable suggestion we have heard on the Bill, and it is quite certain that it must be less expensive than purchase.

Mr. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): If not compulsory.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: I think the compulsory taking of land on lease would be very valuable. I was a little surprised at the answer the Attorney General, with all deference to him, gave to the noble Lord the Member for Hampshire (Viscount Wolmer) on the subject of the cost of an application for a Provisional Order that failed. Under Section 3 of the Bill is the following:—

> "Such price or rent, that all expenses incurred by the sanitary authority in acquiring the land and otherwise in relation to the allotment, may reasonably be expected to be recouped."

Then, under the 6th clause, we find—

> "An amount not less than such as may reasonably be expected to insure the sanitary authority from loss."

Putting the two together, I should have thought that meant all cost in respect of the acquisition of the land, and that the rent to be charged under those words is to be a rent to cover the cost of all the applications, as they are all parts of the cost of acquiring the land. If that is not so, it ought to be made clear.

Sir RICHARD WEBSTER: It is a matter of construction. I only express my opinion, which is that the cost of acquiring the land does not include an abortive attempt. But, if there is any doubt about it, I agree that it ought to be made clear.

Mr. CHAPLIN: I have not the slightest objection to land being taken as is suggested, provided it is taken by agreement; but I object to its being taken for a long lease compulsorily. If you take the land compulsorily, the very least you can do is to buy it outright. Although land is taken by lease in Ireland compulsorily, I recollect at the time it was done I thought it was quite as objectionable then as I do at the present moment. No doubt, as the right hon. Gentleman says, it would be convenient to try it as an experiment, and then, if it failed, the land could be handed back.

THE CHAIRMAN: I must point out there is no proposal of the kind before the Committee, and this is not the time to discuss it.

SIR WALTER FOSTER (Derby, Ilkeston): I want to say one word with respect to the fundamental principle of these compulsory clauses. The object of compulsion being enacted is to enable the agricultural labourer to get the land at an agricultural price, or something near it. Now, if we are to have a mode of procedure which, even for an unopposed Order will cost £25 to get power to buy the land, as the Attorney General has just informed us, that £25 upon a small plot of land—upon two or three acres—would go far to double the price. If, moreover, you have to pay 10 per cent for compulsory sale and 15 per cent for severance, you further raise the price—in fact, you raise it to about double the agricultural price in the neighbourhood. That places the poor agricultural labourer in an unfair position as compared with the farmer and other tillers of the soil. We wish him to be placed in an equally good position with the farmer, and the clauses, therefore, will be inoperative. The price at which we want to get the land for the agricultural labourer is something near the price at which farmers obtain it; but these compulsory clauses would be likely to act as a deterrent, because any landowner, by threatening opposition, can practically kill, by the expenses entailed, any attempt of the kind, and no Local Authority would be justified in going on in the face of opposition. It is thus in the power of any landlord, if he likes to enter opposition, to force the whole thing to fail, for the land, even when bought, could not be let at such a price as would pay the agricultural labourer to take it.

MR. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby): I simply wish to ask the President of the Local Government Board when we shall have this clause in our hands?

MR. RITCHIE: I hope to have it printed to-night.

MR. STAVELEY HILL (Staffordshire, Kingswinford): I only wish to say one word in answer to what fell from the Attorney General. It is quite true there is nothing in the Act at present that gives any compensation for compulsory purchase; but it is also true that a sum varying from 10 to 33 per cent has always been regarded as the sum to be awarded, and though it may not be considered Act of Parliament law it is Judge made law. There is one other exception I have to this mode of raising the value of land, and it is this. Suppose there be an owner of land who, under ordinary circumstances, would be willing to sell by agreement, and he finds by the clause as it stands that he will be able, if he sells, not by agreement but under compulsion, to obtain 10 or 15 per cent put on the purchase price, he will naturally say—"Why on earth shall I sell by agreement?"

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): One item of expenditure has been omitted from consideration by the Attorney General and the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board. The Attorney General mentioned £25 as the figure for which we may expect to get a Provisional Order. Does he mean that is inclusive of solicitor's charges?—because all I can say is that he is greatly mistaken if he thinks so. Suppose an Order is required for some place 300 miles from London, the solicitor, whether he comes alone or with his clerk, is sure to travel first-class.

SIR RICHARD WEBSTER: They need not come.

MR. CONYBEARE: But they always find excuses to come. I will call attention to a particular case in connection with the City of Truro.

SIR RICHARD WEBSTER: For what?

MR. CONYBEARE: It does not matter for what—the principle is the same, and what I am going on is the solicitor's charges. The solicitors take very good care to have a number of journeys to London in such cases, and they always travel first-class, and what I put is this—that when you are considering the purchase of land you have to consider the whole of the circumstances; and, therefore, to talk of £25 being a sufficient sum is not in accordance with fact. I will only say, in conclusion, that I am anxious to see the old-fashioned procedure under the Act of 1845 got rid of as far as possible. Let us have a procedure as cheap and as easy as possible.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

MR. COBB: I propose, in page 2, line 7, after "unable," to insert "within two months after receiving the application or representation named in section two." We object to having any delay in the procedure under the present section if the Sanitary Authority are unable to get land by agreement. Therefore, I propose to insert words providing that if the Sanitary Authority are unable to get land by agreement within two months after receiving a representation from six persons who are authorized to make such a representation they shall then proceed to get the land by the exercise of their compulsory powers.

Amendment proposed, in page 2, line 7, after "unable," insert "within two months after receiving the application or representation named in section two."—(*Mr. Cobb.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. RITCHIE: I cannot accept the Amendment. The negotiations for getting land by agreement might easily extend over the period named by the hon. Member, and it would be out of the question so to limit the powers of the Local Authorities as to compel them to bring the negotiations to a conclusion within the time that it might be possible to conclude them.

Mr. COBB: That is one of the points that I want to raise—that unwilling authorities have power to defeat the operation of the Act by protracted negotiations. The Attorney General spoke just now of the short delay there would be in carrying out the compulsory provisions of the Act. Why, if in a few months the authorities can carry out the provisions for compulsory purchase, surely three months—for I do not desire to insist on two months—would be sufficient for them to come to an agreement to purchase voluntarily. I do not care about the purchase being carried out in that time. But I want to see that something is done by them within a fixed time, and that they are not to be allowed to protract the negotiations for months and months.

Mr. CHANNING: I have listened to this discussion with attention. [*Signs of impatience.*] I do not think we should be interrupted. I think the Government would greatly facilitate the discussion on the Bill if they would name some time within which the compulsory powers of the Bill should be put in force. I do not think it is too much to ask that a Sanitary Authority which, be it recollected, is not elected *ad hoc*, and is only a temporary authority, until the one contracted under the promised Local Government Bill comes into operation, should not be given the plenary powers conferred by this clause merely to please the right hon. Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain), who does not want the Sanitary Authority degraded. Let some time be fixed —three, four, or five months—within which their compulsory powers must be put in force.

Mr. F. S. POWELL (Wigan): I think that the provision embodied in this Amendment would be injurious to the working of the Bill. As the Bill now stands the Sanitary Authority may, as necessity arises, put in force their compulsory powers. But if this Amendment were carried the Local Authorities must act once for all. If they act once then their compulsory powers would be gone for ever. Such a provision must be most injurious to the working of the Bill.

Question put, and *negatived.*

Amendment proposed, in page 2, line 8, after "acquire," to insert "suitable." —(*Colonel Lloyd Anstruther.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'suitable' be there inserted."

Mr. CHANCE: We have heard in the course of this discussion about degrading the Local Authorities, and forcing the hand of the Local Authorities. And now it is proposed solemnly to point out to them that they must only acquire land suitable to the purpose in hand. The Amendment assumes that —if they are not prevented by Parliament—the Local Authority will act foolishly and improperly. If there is any feeling on the other side of the House that the Local Authorities will act foolishly and improperly it is useless to proceed with the Bill. For, depend upon it, if the Local Authorities are going to act foolishly and improperly they will not be prevented from doing so by this Amendment. They must, if they do their duty, select land which they themselves think suitable; and it would be reducing this Act of Parliament to an absurdity to go on to tell them, on the face of the clause, that they are not to make fools of themselves by taking land which is unsuitable. There is no force in the words as they stand. If the Amendment pointed out what was suitable—if it said that the Local Authorities were not to take so and so, then there might be something in it; but to put into the clause the word "suitable," and then leave it at large, seems to me somewhat absurd. Therefore I hope that the Committee will not accept the word, and that the Government will reject it.

Question put, and *negatived.*

Amendment proposed, in page 2, line 8, after "acquire," to insert "at a reasonable price or rent." — (*Mr. Hobhouse.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. RITCHIE: The Government is willing to accept the Amendment.

MR. CHANCE rose, and being received with some marks of impatience on the Ministerial Benches, said: As the Committee seem impatient I will move to report Progress.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. Chance.*)

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I do not know whether it is the real desire of the hon. Gentleman to obstruct the progress of this measure; but I am sure that there has been no impatience manifested which should in the slightest degree arouse the anger expressed by a Motion to report Progress.

MR. CHANCE: I have expressed no anger at all. I am not in the habit of expressing it.

MR. W. H. SMITH: I did not mean to say anything offensive to the hon. Member; but he made a remark which I thought indicated some anger on his part. We are anxious to make progress. If, however, the Committee desire to put an end to the discussion this evening, the Government will not oppose a Motion to report Progress; but, under these circumstances, the responsibility for any consequences which may follow must rest on hon. Gentlemen who desire to interrupt our proceedings.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: I do not think that the House is being treated fairly by the right hon. Gentleman. I never heard a discussion conducted more fairly, or in a more reasonable or business-like way, than this has been. But the right hon. Gentleman has got into such a habit of dealing in one way with every phase of opposition that now his only conception of argument is the application of the closure. I never heard a more unjustifiable speech than that which he has just made, charging the hon. Member behind me with Obstruction, and with endeavouring to defeat the Bill. We have endeavoured all through the evening to forward the Bill. I never heard a more reasonable discussion; and now the right hon. Gentleman walks in and talks as if he was going to compel the House to gallop through a Bill of great importance, and one which the Government admits to require considerable amendment. As for the Motion to report Progress, if the Government expect that a Bill of this importance is going to pass through Committee in a single night, all I can say is that they are very much mistaken. I think Progress should be reported at a reasonable hour. I do not see why the right hon. Gentleman should use the word Obstruction in reference to any proceedings that have taken place to-night.

MR. W. H. SMITH: I am surprised—or rather I am not surprised—at the remarks which the right hon. Gentleman has just made, for they are precisely in the usual vein in which he indulges. I have, however, made no remark which justifies the observations which he has made. A Motion to report Progress was made on an Amendment which was accepted. On that I said that if the hon. Gentleman who made that Motion was annoyed at anything which had been said on this side of the House, there was no intention to cause him any annoyance. Thereupon he said that he was not angry, and that there was no intention to express anger or annoyance by the Motion he made. All I then said was, that if hon. Gentlemen on that side of the House are desirous that Progress should be reported the Government will make no objection. Is that a charge of Obstruction against hon. Gentlemen? We will accept a Motion to report Progress; but we will not take the responsibility of making such a Motion. Gentlemen opposite have taken great interest in the Bill during the evening, and if they think that after spending seven hours on this measure it is time to report Progress, we will, as I have said, accept a Motion to report Progress from them. Is that a charge of Obstruction, or a charge that, in the slightest degree, justifies the language used by the right hon. Gentleman?

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: The reason I made the observation I did was, because the right hon. Gentleman used the word "Obstruction" in replying to the hon. Member behind me (Mr. Chance), and said that if the House desired that Progress should be reported the Government would have no objection; but that if Gentlemen on this side of the House moved to report Progress they must take the responsibility. Does that mean that the Bill should, or should not, go on? If all the right hon. Gentlemen meant was that if Progress was moved now he should have no objection, of course we can take no exception to that.

MR. RITCHIE: An Amendment was proposed, which would be recognized by every Gentleman in this House as a reasonable and proper Amendment, to the effect that words should be inserted in the clause providing that the land for allotments should be acquired at a reasonable price or rent. That Amendment the Government intimated their willingness to accept. The hon. Member for Kilkenny (Mr Chance) then moved to report Progress; and I submit to the Committee this question, whether a Gentleman who merely wished to promote discussion in the interest of the Bill was likely to have moved to report Progress under such circumstances?

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I would ask the indulgence of the Committee for a moment. The time has now arrived when there was an understanding that progress should be made with another measure—the Truck Bill. I would ask the Committee kindly to report Progress now, in order that a measure over which I have sat up many nights this Session may be taken.

MR. CHANCE: I am sorry that the First Lord of the Treasury thought proper to charge me not only with Obstruction, but with showing heat and temper.

MR. W. H. SMITH: I at once accepted the hon. Member's statement that he did not mean to be angry or to show temper. This is what happened. I said, in the first instance, that he was angry at some observations made on this side of the House. He at once said that there was no anger on his part. I then withdrew my observation. I am sorry for it, and there is an end of it.

MR. CHANCE: I understood that the right hon. Gentleman withdrew his observation; but, having withdrawn it, and sat down, then comes the President of the Local Government Board, charges the same thing over again, calls on the House to sit in judgment on me, and asks whether my conduct is consistent with a desire to forward the Bill. I think my conduct is more consistent with a desire to see an effective Bill pass this House than is the conduct of the Government, who accept an Amendment moved by one of their Unionist supporters, who did not think it necessary to be in his place to move it when it was down on the Paper. But let me inform the President of the Local Government Board that I do not propose to shirk any responsibility which my Motion may attach to me, or to allow him or any other Gentleman to bully, or attempt to bully, me out of doing what I deem to be my duty. And, further, I beg to inform the President of the Local Government Board that his conduct in repeating these charges after the First Lord of the Treasury has very considerately withdrawn them will not assist this Bill through the House or promote the progress of any legislation of which he may have charge.

THE CHAIRMAN: Does the hon. Member withdraw his Motion to report Progress?

MR. CHANCE: No, Sir; I have made the Motion, and I propose to divide upon it.

MR. CHANNING: I must protest against the wholly unfair and unjust charges made by the right hon. Gentleman that the Liberal Mambers have obstructed this Bill. I desire to draw the attention of the Committee and the country to the fact that so far are we on this side of the House from having adopted obstructive tactics, that during the last half-hour we have abstained from dividing on two questions of importance in order to facilitate progress. Our position is that this Bill, to be a useful measure, needs essential Amendments, and, provided Amendments tending to make the Bill a reality instead of a sham, I do not care myself whether the Amendments come from Conservatives, from Liberals, or from Liberal Unionists; and I should venture to ask my hon. Friend the Member for Kilkenny (Mr. Chance) to withdraw his Motion to report Progress until the Amendment of the hon. Member for East Somerset (Mr. Hobhouse) has been put from the Chair. Then I think we may very well ask the Government to report Progress. Any fair-minded person must see that one of the most vital questions in the Bill—whether we should allow an additional sum for compulsory purchase or not—is about to come on for discussion. It is, therefore, very important that we should be allowed to report Progress at this stage. Any charge of Obstruction in this matter would be entirely misplaced.

MR. SEALE-HAYNE: We have now got to line 8 of the clause. We come next to the consideration of the County Authorities. Do I understand rightly that the County Authority is to remain as it stands at present in the Bill?

MR. RITCHIE: I propose to retain the County Authority as it now stands in the Bill until a new County Authority is appointed by the Local Government Bill which the Government intend to bring forward.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: I do not wish that the question of reporting Progress should be decided under any misapprehension. I should like to know from the Government what they think of now reporting Progress on the Bill. We cannot, it is clear, finish the Bill to-night. At the same time, I think we should do all we can to facilitate progress in any way. We cannot go on much longer; but we should wish to meet the views of the right hon. Gentleman opposite in charge of the Bill as to the time when Progress should be reported.

SIR WALTER FOSTER: Many Gentlemen who have acted with me in this matter, and who take a great interest in this Bill, have expressed their desire—from fatigue at the eight hours continuous labour they have undergone—that Progress should be reported. I think that is only reasonable.

MR. RITCHIE: I think we might have completed sub-section (2). If, however, there is a general desire that Progress should be reported, I will not object.

MR. CHAPLIN: The hour is yet comparatively early. We are rapidly approaching the close of the Session, and unless progress is made very shortly with this Bill it will be absolutely impossible to pass it during this Session. I should have thought that Gentlemen who wish the Bill to pass during this Session would have been willing to work at it, even at some inconvenience to themselves, for a little longer time. Indeed, I cannot help looking upon the manner in which this Motion to report Progress has been received as a test of the sincerity of hon. Members opposite in regard to this Bill. I do not think that the hon. Member who moved to report Progress had any cause to express surprise at the manner in which his Motion was received. This Bill is confined to England. It does not extend to Scotland or Ireland. There are Members on both sides of the House representing English constituencies who are deeply interested in this Bill; and I think that it is rather a strong order that when an Amendment has been moved in which many of these Gentlemen take great interest a Gentleman who represents no one interested in the Bill, which does not extend to Ireland, should make a Motion to report Progress in opposition to Gentlemen who are interested in the Bill. If we bring the discussion to a premature close to-night and these tactics are adopted, I do not see how it is possible to pass the Bill this Session.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I must appeal to the Committee partly in my own interest, and partly in that of the public. There is an understanding that the Lords' Amendments to the Truck Bill are to be considered to-night. There was almost an understanding that at 1 o'clock—an hour at which we have nearly arrived—the consideration of those Amendments should be taken. I must make a special appeal on this point to the First Lord of the Treasury.

MR. BROADHURST (Nottingham, W.): I am not particularly anxious that Progress should be reported, but I must protest against the language of the right hon. Member for the Sleaford Division (Mr. Chaplin). I must beg the Leader of the House to assume some control over his supporters. The right hon. Gentleman himself withdrew the charge of Obstruction. Then the President of the Local Government Board gets up and repeats it, and now the right hon. Member for the Sleaford Division says that he regards the manner in which this Motion is treated as a test of the sincerity of Members on this side of the House in regard to the Bill. Why, Sir, the Bill is more the child of this side of the House than of the other. The Bill belongs more to us than it does to the Government, who threw it hastily together before they understood the subject. I would really beg the First Lord of the Treasury to induce his followers to be more civil in the observations they address to this side of the House.

Mr. CHANCE: The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Sleaford Division charges me with Obstruction, because I desired to report Progress on a clause which contains the very principle to which he only a short time ago gave an emphatic "No." He wants a Division as a test of sincerity. He shall have it soon.

Mr. W. H. SMITH: Obstruction has been mentioned, but I do not think there is any form of Obstruction worse than discussing for 20 minutes whether we shall go on or not. Therefore, in order to put an end to this discussion, I will consent to report Progress.

Motion *agreed to.*

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon *Thursday* next.

Sir WALTER FOSTER: Does the right hon. Gentleman propose to take the Bill as a first Order?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: I cannot say that. There is some time to be appropriated to the discussion of another important question, if hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway opposite and right hon. Gentlemen opposite desire to raise that question. I cannot say when this Bill will be taken again.

Sir JOHN SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield): Will the Bill be reprinted? I ask because we have Amendments in manuscript; we have Amendments in print; we have Amendments which have been passed; and we have Amendments contemplated. It will be difficult to deal with all these unless we have the Bill reprinted. Nobody knows what the Government intend to bring forward. We are perfectly in the dark as to what they intend to do, and I should like to ask them to reprint the Bill with their intentions upon it.

Mr. RITCHIE: There has been no Amendment made in the Bill which renders it necessary that we should reprint it.

Sir JOHN SWINBURNE: You have Amendments in manuscript.

Mr. RITCHIE: They are not in the Bill. The Bill is not in manuscript.

Sir JOHN SWINBURNE: But we have here a new clause.

Mr. RITCHIE: I would point out that the two new proposals of the Government we were careful to have put in print, and to hand to hon. Gentlemen, who have got them now in their possession. I will take care that the manuscript clause I read, as well as the clause printed upon slips, will appear on the Paper in the course of the next day or two.

Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): I hope the right hon. Gentleman will put down in his own name those Amendments which he proposes to adopt, whether they are at present in his own name or not. He suggested that he was prepared to accept certain Amendments on the Paper, and I think it would be better that he should put these Amendments down in his own name, so that we may know exactly what the Government intend to do.

Mr. BROADHURST: If the Bill is taken on Thursday, will the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury say whether or not it will be after 10 o'clock at night?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: I am not able to answer that question. If we are fortunate enough to reach it on Thursday we shall take it at any hour.

TRUCK BILL.—[Bill 377.]

CONSIDERATION OF LORDS' AMENDMENTS.

Lords Amendments *considered.*

First Amendment, in line 17, to leave out "which," and insert "whom," read.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I move to agree to this first Amendment.

Motion made, and Question, "That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said Amendment,"—(*Mr. Bradlaugh,*)—put, and *agreed to.*

Lords' Amendment, leave out Clause 3, and insert—

"(A.) Whenever by agreement, custom, or otherwise, a workman is entitled to receive in anticipation of the regular period of the payment of his wages an advance as part or on account thereof, it shall not be lawful for the employer to make any deduction in respect of such advance on account of poundage, discount, or interest, or any similar charge,"

—the next Amendment, read.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I move to agree with the Lords' Amendment leaving out Clause 3, and inserting Clause (A).

Motion made, and Question, "That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said Amendment,"—(*Mr. Bradlaugh,*)—put, and *agreed to.*

MR. BRADLAUGH: I wish to amend the new clause, in line 4, after the word "to," by inserting "withhold such advance or."

Amendment proposed, to the Lords' Amendment, page 1, Clause (A), line 4, after "to," and insert "withhold such advance or."—(*Mr. Bradlaugh*)

Question, "That those words be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

Lords' Amendment, leave out Clause 4, read.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I beg to move to disagree with the Lords' Amendment leaving out Clause 4. Clause 4 is the clause enacting that where a workman other than a servant in husbandry is employed in Ireland for long periods of time his wages shall be paid weekly. In 1871 I may mention that a Royal Commission especially reported, in language much more effective than anything I could give, that where men did not receive their wages every week in order to enable them to support their families truck credit would in some form be obtained by them during the intervals between the payments. The Commission went on to say that in Wales and Scotland, where there were long intervals between the payments, in some cases the workmen were unable to live in the interim without assistance, and that in many instances the truck system was availed of, although not of a compulsory kind. They pointed out that in order to abolish truck it was necessary to deal with long payments.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House doth disagree with the Lords in the said Amendment."—(*Mr. Bradlaugh.*)

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER) (Isle of Wight): I must say I am rather surprised at the speech of the hon. Member for Northampton, and I think that for once in his life he has rather forgotten what he said on a previous occasion. He has forgotten what he said on the occasion of this clause being brought before the House by the hon. Member for West Belfast (Mr. Sexton). As I intend to ask the House to agree with the Lords' Amendment, I should like to ask it to recollect the exact position in which the matter now stands. There was nothing in the Bill, as originally brought in by the hon. Member, which dealt with the question of weekly payments. An attempt was made to come to some agreement on the question of periodical payments; but it was found impossible, when the Bill was in Committee, to make an arrangement satisfactory to all parties, and the question was dropped. The hon. Member for West Belfast, I think on the Report stage, or, at any rate, at a later period of the Bill, brought in this 4th clause. I ventured then to protest against this insertion, because I considered it to be dealing piecemeal with an important subject, and also because it simply applied to one part of the United Kingdom where it seemed there were considerations of a very important character which made it necessary for the matter to be discussed as carefully as it would if were proposed to apply the section to England. However, the hon. Member for West Belfast won his point. The hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) quite admitted that this Amendment was not within the scope of the Bill as introduced by him, and he did not press it very strongly, although he said he should vote in favour of it. He said the Amendment was one for which the House was by no means bound to vote.

MR. BRADLAUGH: My recollection of the circumstances is not quite the same. My belief is that I got up, after the discussion had proceeded some length, and said that with reference to England so many objections had been urged that I could not accept any proposal to establish weekly payments; but with reference to Ireland I had not heard the same objections; that it was supported by Irish Members on both sides; and that I thought that point ought to be taken into consideration.

Sir RICHARD WEBSTER: There could not then have been a question of any distinction between England and Ireland, because that question was not raised until the hon. Member for West Belfast brought it out. The House of Lords considers that this is a question which ought to be dealt with as a whole and not piecemeal, and it is quite clear that there are considerations which make this a difficult matter to deal with in the way originally agreed upon in this House. I think it would be a great pity if in this Bill, otherwise containing very useful matter, there should be introduced a question involving serious dispute and difficulty.

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): In disagreeing with the Lords' Amendment, and in supporting the Motion of the hon. Member for Northampton, I wish to bring to the remembrance of the House the circumstances under which this clause was inserted in the Bill. There had been a strike amongst the shipwrights of Belfast. It was a strike of long duration and of some magnitude, and about 6,000 men were for over six weeks out of work. After the men had been out of work for that period an appeal was made to me for my advice; and considering the sufferings that were being endured by the men and their families, and the danger to the peace of Belfast through the long strike, I advised the men to petition to this House, and, depending on the sense of justice of this House, they returned to their work. They petitioned this House, and upon the Report stage of this Bill, as the hon. and learned Attorney General has correctly stated, I moved the insertion of this clause. Now, the reason for the insertion of the clause is three-fold. In the first place, weekly payment of wages to the men is almost universal in Ireland, and what I asked the House to do was to make the law accord to the practice which had grown up in view of the known desires and ascertained necessities of the people of Ireland. My second argument was that the opinion of the Representatives of Ireland was all but unanimously in favour of the clause; and my third reason was the interests of Belfast itself. I maintain that the matter of this clause is closely germane to the object of the Bill. The object of the Bill is not only to provide that men should be paid in money for their labour, but that they should take their money into the best available market. It has been found that the payment of wages fortnightly plunges the men into a system of credit, and the effect is to produce a system of truck—a very bad system of truck, because it obliges them to resort to certain shops and to put up with certain terms which, having regard to the price and quality of the goods, they would not accept had they their wages in their hands every week. That is the general argument for the clause. What are the arguments against it? There are only two arguments alleged against it, and the first is that a larger clerical staff would have to be employed in order to pay the men every week. Now, I have made many inquiries on this point, and the universal reply I receive is that in large establishments the staff which could pay the wages once a fortnight could also pay it once a week. The second argument which was urged against this clause was that if you pass it you will handicap local industry; but that argument will not stand for one moment. If you refer to the facts, you will find that the great shipyard of Messrs. Harland and Wolff was founded upon the payment of weekly wages, and that upon that system it reached the highest point of success. For many years they continued to pay weekly wages, and it was only so late as 18 months ago that the wages which before that were paid every week were changed to once a fortnight. And the only reverse and the only drawback which the establishment has met with has occurred since the fortnightly payments were established. Such were the arguments I used when I brought this clause before the House. When I brought the question forward it was fully debated. It was discussed by hon. Members in every quarter of the House, and it was treated from every point of view. Did I object to the clause on its merits? I did not object to the clause on its merits. A Division was taken, and the Division was taken in a larger House than it is at present—a House possibly of about 200 Members. The clause was carried by a majority of almost two to one. The Division revealed two very remarkable facts. I have said already that Irish opinion is almost unanimously in favour of the clause—40 of the Irish Members present voted in its favour, and two voted against it. One of the two was the right hon. and learned Gentleman the senior Member for the University of Dublin (Mr. Plunket), whose representative capacity to decide between employer and employed is of the most qualified kind, and the other was the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell), whose belief in the equity of the House of Peers in dealing with Irish matters has undergone a change since last month. If Irish opinion was to prevail in reference to Irish questions, when you have a vote of 42 Irish Members, with 40 on one side and two on the other, that was a vote which I think ought to be conclusive. How was that majority composed? In addition to the Irish Members it was composed of Members of the two Parties in the State. There were 40 Members of the Irish Party, 39 Members of the Liberal Party, and 46 Members who supported the Government, so that the largest portion of the majority which supported my clause last month consisted of supporters of the Government, and among them was the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews). I attach a great weight to that vote, because the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary is the Minister who is specially charged with the care of questions concerning the interest of employer and employed. Such being the case, I venture humbly to say that the Lords would have been more wise if they had not interfered. They would have been more judicious if they had allowed the clause to stand. Was the clause debated in the House of Peers? No, Sir. What occurred was this. The Duke of Argyll, a Peer whose connection with Ireland it would be difficult to trace, opposed the clause, which he said was a matter that ought to be dealt with by an Irish Peer. The Irish Peer did not intervene, and the Peer in charge of the Bill lifted his head and said "Withdraw." Lord Macnaghten did not object to the withdrawal of the clause. So that this clause, after being debated in this House at length, was disposed of in a few seconds by about 20 Peers, not one of whom has any real knowledge of Ireland. I appeal to all Parties in this House whether this is a proper method of dealing with the interests of working men? I had an opportunity of telling the story before the electors of Northwich, and I intend to tell it on every hustings on which I appear in England. I think the House of Lords in consequence of this action stands in bad odour with the working classes; and the present Government, in sympathizing with that action, will not do themselves any good. On the former occasion I was the only Member for Belfast who happened to be in the House. My Colleagues in the representation of that town were engaged elsewhere—were engaged on duties which they considered more imperative, and I do not question their right. These workmen are not my constituents. They have no political sympathy with me. I have received no support from them in the past, and I expect none from them in the future. I see present now the hon. Members for East and South Belfast (Mr. De Cobain and Mr. Johnston), who were elected by these Orangemen, and I ask these Gentlemen to testify to their position. For myself, I have laid before the House my position, but I certainly appeal to the House; and I trust the House will act not only in a spirit of equity, but in the interest of public peace, in disagreeing with the Lords' Amendment.

MR. DONALD CRAWFORD (Lanark, N.E.): Although this clause refers only to Ireland, yet it touches a principle in which hon. Members for Scotland and England also take a very great interest. I do not propose, at this hour of the morning (1.20), to address the House at any great length. But I wish to refer to the statement of the hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General (Sir Richard Webster), which I think is not a sufficiently full account of what took place on a former occasion. It is quite true that in the Bill of my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) this clause did not occur; but it is also true that the subject was immediately brought to the attention of the Government, because there was a similar clause applying to the United Kingdom in another Bill relating to the subject of truck, from which considerable portions of the Bill as now amended have been taken; but not only so; at an early period of the discussion of this Bill, which went on for a great many weeks, at long intervals, the Government adopted the principle of weekly payments, and the hon. and learned Gentleman inserted a clause in the draft of the Bill, and circulated that Bill to everybody who took an interest in the subject as embodying the views of the Government upon this subject. I must say that I regretted at the time when the final discussion upon this subject took place that somewhat greater firmness on this important point was not displayed in quarters where firmness is not generally wanting, and that a really cordial support to this clause was not given in all parts of the House. If the opinion of the Royal Commission that the lack of periodical payments lay at the root of all the evils of truck had always been stated with the force with which it was stated to-night, I think it would hardly have been possible for the fallacy to gain any acceptance at all that this was a subject not belonging to a Truck Bill at all, but a totally different subject. It certainly belongs to a Truck Bill. It lies at the root of the evil of truck; and, apart from the desire of Irish Members which they have a right to give effect to, and though this clause applies to Ireland only, I think it is of the utmost importance that we should have this principle acknowledged and given effect to in any part of the United Kingdom, in order that afterwards we may have it given effect to in England and Scotland as well. Therefore I hope the House will disagree with the Lords' Amendment.

Mr. DE COBAIN (Belfast, E.): I will not intrude myself at any length at this hour (1.25). But I think the Lords' Amendment will have a very prejudicial effect. My hon. Friend the Member for South Belfast (Mr. Johnston) had an Amendment on the Paper to a similar effect as the Amendment of the hon. Member for West Belfast (Mr. Sexton), and I had one somewhat similar, but wider in its scope, as it provided for a weekly payment for piece work of at least 75 per cent of the wages earned one week and a full settlement on the alternate week; but we had not an opportunity of moving them. The strike which occurred in Belfast some time ago was a very disastrous one, and seriously affected the industrial class of our town. When I came over to London I had an opportunity of consulting the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary on the matter, and he expressed the view that he would like as much as possible to see a weekly payment of wages effected, or a form of payment of wages that would meet the interest and convenience of the working classes, and it was after my conference with the Home Secretary that I drew up the Amendment to which I have before referred. The industry of shipbuilding in Belfast is very extensive, and has been very prosperous, and, as the hon. Member for West Belfast has already stated, its prosperity dated before the system of fortnightly payments, which has been an act of recent innovation, and which was tried experimentally with the consent of the workmen. It was, as I understand, an agreement between the employers and the *employés*, and the condition upon which it was tried was that if it were found not convenient the employers would revert to the old system. The fact of getting the wages weekly enables the artizans to make better markets and to expend their money to better advantage. My own impression is this—that there is no industry which would be prejudicially affected by this system of weekly payments; and as by this system we will, I believe, contribute materially to the well-being of the working class, which forms so large a proportion of the town which I represent, I think we should dissent from the Lords' Amendment. I am glad to understand that so far as I know the representative feeling not merely of Belfast, but of the whole North of Ireland, are in favour of the clause which was inserted at the instance of the hon. Member for West Belfast. I do not appear on behalf of the *employés* in the matter of shipbuilding. But all the other great industries in Belfast adopt the system of weekly payment, and I believe some of the employers in the shipbuilding industry are perfectly willing that this system of weekly payments should be accepted, and would have complied with the wishes of the men, only for the action of one or two associated with the great firm of Harland and Wolff, who objected to the weekly system. I sincerely hope that the House, having regard to the interests of the working people of Belfast, will object to this Amendment of the Lords striking out the weekly wages clause, and that to-night, by our vote, we shall insist upon restoring the Bill to the position in which it left this House. To eliminate this clause by consenting to the Lords' Amendment would certainly inflict most serious hardships upon those working men whom I am proud in this House to represent.

Sir JAMES CORRY (Armagh, Mid): I hope, in the interest of the working men of Belfast, the House will agree with the Lords in this Amendment. I claim to speak with some degree of knowledge of the working men of Belfast, and I think, with reference to this particular industry, perhaps the firm I am connected with has done more for the working men of Belfast than those of all the other Gentlemen who represent Belfast here. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"]

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order!

Sir JAMES CORRY: The fact is, this question of the payment of weekly wages has nothing whatever to do with truck, and I am much astonished that the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh), after the speech he made on Wednesday afternoon in which he stated that the House should not interfere with adults in their arrangements with their employers, should now favour any interference with that principle. It is all very well to say that the weekly payment of wages is not a matter of indifference. If the weekly payment of wages were made general throughout the United Kingdom, I, for one, would not object; but I do take great exception to Ireland being singled out for this particular object, and especially when I know it is directed against one particular firm in Ireland. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] Yes; it is directed against one particular firm and no other, because if it had not been for the strike which took place amongst the shipwrights we should not have heard a word of this clause being introduced into this Truck Bill. We all know in these days of great competition that tenders for large amounts are being given out, and £100 in a tender of £100,000, or £200,000 sometimes makes all the difference. Fortnightly payments of wages on the Clyde and on the East Coast of England, with which the large firms of Belfast have to compete, is almost universal. One reason I can state to the House why the employers found it desirable to change from the weekly to the fortnightly payment was this—that the men were more at work under the fortnightly system than after the weekly payment was introduced. I am satisfied that this matter should be left entirely to the employers and the workmen to settle amongst themselves. If it were a matter in which they could not protect themselves, I would say that this House should interfere; but this House has no right to interfere, I say, where the masters and the workmen can take care of themselves. I do not intend to detain the House any longer, but I hope the House will agree with the Lords' Amendment.

Mr. PROVAND (Glasgow, Blackfriars, &c.): The hon. Baronet the Member for Mid Armagh said the shipyards on the Clyde almost all paid wages fortnightly. My impression is that in that statement he is mistaken, and I would draw his attention to the fact that the hon. Member for the Govan Division of Lanark (Sir William Pearce), who is head of the yard doing the largest shipbuilding business on the Clyde, stated that he paid wages weekly, and it was his impression that they were so paid, not only on the Clyde generally, but also on the Tyne and other places on the East Coast, where the wages were fixed; but for piece work they were, no doubt, paid at longer periods than one week.

Sir JAMES CORRY: I wish to correct the hon. Member. The hon. Member for the Govan Division could not have made that statement, because he told me himself he pays fortnightly and sometimes over. He introduced weekly payment of wages and his workmen came and asked him to pay fortnightly.

Mr. BROADHURST (Nottingham, W.): I should like to say one word only, and it is to the hon. Gentleman who spoke last (Sir James Corry). If the shipbuilders of Belfast want to compete successfully with the builders of other places they cannot do a better thing than make their payments as short as possible. My experience, extending over a great number of years, is that where weekly payments prevail over fortnightly or monthly payments, there you get a better class of workmen, you get steadier workmen, and more work done. Deferred wage payments are always productive of great irregularity of work, and you get little thrift amongst the community; a system of debt and credit is entered into by them of necessity, and they are never able to shake it off. I know nothing that trades unionism had more to contend with than deferred payments. I sincerely hope the House will disagree with the Lords' Amendment. In cases where the income is small comparatively—where the wages are small—the way to produce the most sobriety and thrift, and to produce the best workmen is to make the payments weekly and not fortnightly.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): I think I shall best consult the convenience of the House by making any observations I offer as brief as possible. My hon. Friend the Member for Mid Armagh (Sir James Corry) has spoken against the proposition of the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh), and I acknowledge his right to speak in reference to the industrial interests of Belfast. It will always be remembered to his credit that the hon. Baronet, on one occasion when the shipbuilding yards were at a standstill and workmen out of employment, gave orders for the building of a ship at the cost of £30,000, so that the workmen of Belfast might have employment. Acknowledging, then, that he has the industrial interests of Belfast at heart, yet on this question I find myself compelled to differ from his view, and I entirely support the view of the hon. Member for Northampton. Indeed, I was the first to place on the Paper an Amendment to carry out these objects.

Mr. SEXTON: The hon. Member is mistaken. His Amendment appeared for the first time on Report—mine was given Notice of a week before.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I accept the hon. Member's statement; but I placed my Amendment on the Paper on June 29, and his appeared on the 30th. However, my only object now is to say that I disagree with the proposition of the Lords to omit Clause 4, and join in what has been said by the hon. Member opposite as to the advantage of weekly payments.

Mr. TOMLINSON (Preston): Having taken a great deal of interest in the Bill, and having voted against the clause, perhaps I may be allowed a word as to the reason that induced me to do so. My objection was to the introduction of a fixed period of payment being imposed without sufficient knowledge of the custom and conveniences of trade. It happened that I had given consideration to this subject in conjunction with several employers of labour who desired to see whether a clause could be devised which would satisfy the interests of employers and employed. The result of our consultation was that we found it hopeless to accomplish this; the more we considered the subject the more difficult it became, and we concluded that it was desirable to exclude such a provision from the Bill altogether. I cannot reconcile it with my idea of what is right to make an enactment for one isolated case in a particular trade. I quite admit that the law of wages may be a proper subject to be dealt with by Parliament in a full and comprehensive manner by a Bill for the purpose; but I think it would be found necessary to refer such a Bill to a Select Committee in order that evidence might be obtained as to its operation upon various industries.

Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): I merely rise to ask the Government, after the discussion we have had, not to make this a Government Division. I do not know whether the hon. and learned Attorney General spoke as a Member of the Government, or in his private capacity?

Sir RICHARD WEBSTER: I said distinctly this was not a Government question at all, and there would be no Government vote given on it.

Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE: I am glad to hear that. I think it ought to be determined by Irish opinion. The House has declared in favour of the clause, and I understand not a single Irish Peer voted in the small majority by which the clause was rejected.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Several Amendments *disagreed with.*

Several Amendments *agreed to.*

Amendment, in page 2, line 27, to leave out from "expended" to end of Clause.

Motion made, and Question, "That this House doth disagree with the Lords in the said Amendment,"—(*Mr. Bradlaugh,*)—put, and *agreed to.*

Amendment proposed, to amend the words so re-instated in the Bill, by leaving out from "expended," in line 32, to end of Clause.—(*Mr. Bradlaugh.*)

Question, "That those words be there left out," put, and *agreed to.*

Several Amendments *disagreed to.*

Consequential Amendment proposed, in page 2, line 39, to leave out the words "parent or guardian," and insert the word "workman."—(*Mr. Attorney General.*)

Question, "That that word be there substituted," put, and *agreed to.*

Clause 12 (Lords Amendment to omit the Clause.)

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): To this I must ask the House to disagree. It is a most important and vital part of the Bill. It was fully and specially reported upon by the Commission in treating of the truck system in Shetland in 1872, and it has again been reported upon by the Chief Inspector of Factories. I do not know whether the Government accept the disagreement. [Sir RICHARD WEBSTER expressed assent.] Then I need not occupy time.

Motion made, and Question, "That this House doth disagree with the Lords in the said Amendment,"—(*Mr. Bradlaugh*,)—put, and *agreed to.*

Committee *appointed*, "to draw up Reasons to be assigned to The Lords for disagreeing to certain Amendments to which this House hath disagreed:"—Mr. Bradlaugh, Mr. Secretary Matthews, Mr. Attorney General for England, Mr. Stuart-Wortley, Mr. Warmington, Mr. John Ellis, Mr. Arthur Williams, Mr. Howard Vincent, and Mr. Esslemont:—To withdraw immediately; Three to be the quorum.

POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANKS AND GOVERNMENT ANNUITIES BILL.

[BILL 344.]

(*Mr. Raikes, Mr. Jackson.*)

CONSIDERATION. [ADJOURNED DEBATE.]

Order read for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment on Consideration of Bill, as amended [18th August],

And which Amendment was that the Clause (Exception of money invested in completing annual maximum) be read a second time.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Clause *added.*

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): The clause of which I have given Notice is very nearly the same as that accepted, and I, therefore, do not move it.

On the Motion of Mr. RAIKES, the following Amendments made:—In page 2, line 6, to leave out "second," and insert "first;" in page 5, line 18, leave out "second," and insert "first;" in page 5, line 19, "leave out "third," and insert "second;" in Schedules, page 7, line 2, leave out "second," and insert "first;" page 9, line 10, leave out "third," and insert "second."

Bill to be read the third time *To-morrow.*

COAL MINES, &c. REGULATION BILL.

[BILL 130.]

(*Mr. Secretary Matthews, Mr. Stuart-Wortley.*)

COMMITTEE. [*Progress* 17*th August.*]

Bill *considered* in Committee.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): May I ask the Government on what day they expect the consideration of the new clauses to be resumed?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): In answer to that Question, I can only repeat what I said yesterday—it is impossible for me now to name a day on which the Report of the Coal Mines Bill will be taken. The Bill must go through Committee, and I see no prospect of an early day for that unless hon. Members will accept the suggestion I have made, and waive their right to move new clauses, reserving it for the next stage. When the Bill has passed through Committee I will name the earliest possible day for Report.

MR. CONYBEARE: I was under the impression that an understanding was arrived at to make the next stage of the Bill the first Order of the Day, when we would discuss the new clauses. So far as I am concerned, I am ready to fall in with that view, if the hon. Member for Morpeth (Mr. Burt) and others interested desire it. But I ask that it should be made the first Order on the earliest day possible.

MR. W. H. SMITH: Yes; undoubtedly that will be so. I was under the impression that the hon. Member declined to accept that view; but if the Bill is allowed to pass through Committee, I will appoint the earliest possible day for Report, and make it the first Business of the day.

Bill *reported;* as amended, to be considered upon *Monday* next, and to be *printed.* [Bill 383.]

MR. BROADHURST (Nottingham, W.): Will the right hon. Gentleman agree to give the Bill precedence over the Allotments Bill? It has been got through so far with great labour, and we are anxious that it should reach "another place" as soon as possible, for we have the gravest apprehension as to what may happen to it there.

Mr. W. H. SMITH: I can give no more definite undertaking than I have given.

METROPOLITAN POLICE (*re-committed*) BILL.—[Bill 321.]

(*Mr. Secretary Matthews, Mr. Stuart Wortley.*)

COMMITTEE. [*Progress 13th August.*]

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 2 (Extension of borrowing powers under 49 Vic. c. 22, s. 3).

Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): As no explanation has been given on any of the previous stages of the Bill, I hope the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary will explain for what the largely increased expenditure is contemplated? The Bill of 1886 showed the sum of £200,000; but that is now raised to £500,000; of course, throwing a much larger charge on the Metropolitan rates and the Exchequer.

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): The right hon. Gentleman says rightly; the Bill of last year was for £200,000, and that was to carry out a policy approved by successive Secretaries of State, especially by the right hon. Gentlemen the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt)—the policy of purchasing as many of the freeholds of Metropolitan Police Stations as possible. The stations are held on leases of varying lengths, many of them at very high rents, and it was thought desirable by degrees to acquire the freeholds, and this power to borrow £200,000 was taken for that purpose. This policy was continued until last year came the question of a central station, and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) had made arrangements for this just before I came into Office. The difficulty of finding a site in Westminster, where, by Statute, the station is required to be, was very great. Three sites were suggested—the Carington House site in Whitehall, opposite the Horse Guards, but that was found too small, it being only 22,000 feet square; the King Street site, where there is vacant Crown land, was refused; and nothing was left but the Opera House site. The cost of this is £186,000, to which we have to add the cost of the building to be put upon it. Instead of houses on both sides of the road, as in Scotland Yard, with offices under ground, with arrangements most inconvenient for the transaction of business, and certainly not sanitary, with clothing and stores littered about in premises very unfitted for the purpose, we shall have a central establishment for the police, concentrated in one building, at a cost estimated by the architect—Mr. Norman Shaw—at £93,000. I ought to say that the site, which costs £186,000, consists of 70,000 square feet, of which only 30,000 will be wanted for building, at present; 19,000 will be required for roadway and courtyard, light and air, and 20,000 square feet will probably be available for letting or selling. This will materially reduce the cost of the site by some £90,000; but it has been thought better to take additional borrowing powers of £300,000. Any other details I shall be glad to give; but, of course, at this late hour, I am anxious to shorten the explanation as much as possible. It is a convenient site for a central station; that it should be in Westminster, is a Statutory necessity, and proximity to the Home Office is an essential condition, and it was impossible to secure a site fulfilling these conditions without a large expenditure.

Mr. BROADHURST (Nottingham, W.): I should like to say that I, having had the honour of the charge of the Bill of 1886, can vouch for the thorough examination to which every detail of it was submitted; and, I think, a more wise and economic proposal for expenditure on behalf of the ratepayers could not well be imagined. I should like, also, to point out that in the Bill of 1886 we actually passed a Leasehold Enfranchisement Bill, and established the principle that the police should have the power of compulsorily acquiring the freehold of their leasehold property. It became law, somewhat to my amusement and surprise, and I did not think it necessary to call special attention to it. Then, with regard to the Opera House site, I think the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary might have spoken still more strongly of its advantages, and of the transaction that was carried through by my right hon. Friend the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers). I was cognizant of all the negotiations to obtain a site; and, having regard to all the circumstances, I think my right hon. Friend did wisely on behalf of the Government; and I do not think a suitable site could have been obtained at less expenditure.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I do not rise to make any objection; but I should like to express my opinion upon what the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary said about the sale of the surplus land. I hope no hasty steps will be taken in development of that view, and I would draw attention to Clause 4.

THE CHAIRMAN: We are now considering Clause 2.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: I would just ask, will the King Street establishment be removed, or will it be left where it now is? In the reconstruction of that part of the Metropolis, I should have thought it would have been more economic to leave it there.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. STUART-WORTLEY) (Sheffield, Hallam): That is not yet settled; it is a matter under consideration. The promoters of the scheme under which the King Street improvements are to be made, are bound to put us in as good position as if we were still there; and we shall avail ourselves of that condition, either to remove entirely to the Opera House site, or not, as may seem best. The 4th clause had the attention of a hybrid Committee upstairs, and the rights of the public were thus safeguarded.

Clause *agreed to.*

Clauses 3 and Preamble severally *agreed to.*

Bill *reported* without Amendment; Bill read the third time, and *passed.*

CRIMINAL LAW (SCOTLAND) PROCEDURE (No. 2) BILL.

CONSIDERATION OF LORDS' AMENDMENTS.

[ADJOURNED DEBATE.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Consideration of Lords Amendments [18th August].

DR. CLARK (Caithness): I would ask, does the Lord Advocate intend to continue this Bill, after all these changes made in its principle?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): No doubt, there are a considerable number of changes on the Paper; but they are small Amendments, and most of them of a practical character. I have followed them carefully, with hon. Members interested, especially with my Predecessor, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Clackmannan (Mr. J. B. Balfour); and we are perfectly satisfied. The only two Amendments that really make any alteration in the Bill arose out of a new clause, put down as an Amendment by the hon. Member for the St. Rollox Division of Glasgow (Mr. Caldwell). This he did not move in Committee; but allowed the other clauses to be disposed of. It was impossible to put it into shape without careful consultation with those having technical knowledge of the subject. It was carefully gone over, and the hon. Member is perfectly satisfied that the Lords' Amendment carries out his intention. The other Amendments are merely of a formal character.

DR. CLARK: I am not satisfied with the explanation, and I must ask the right hon. and learned Gentleman if he considers that such a vital change as that made in the period of 110 days, for which a man being kept in prison without trial, and could no longer be imprisoned or afterwards tried, is of a formal character. Then there is a change in regard to the right to see prisoners after they are taken in charge. This is not the time, and considering the hour when we are to meet again, it does not give us an opportunity to consider these important changes, especially that which gives power to extend the 110 days period. Modifications of Scotch law should be in a direction more favourable to the prisoner. But I think it would be absurd to attempt to raise these points now, and beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Dr. Clark.*)

MR. J. H. A. MACDONALD: The clause directly limits the time, and if you look at it you will see that it only operates in the case of absolute necessity arising from three causes, either from the illness of the prisoner himself, or from the illness or absence of a necessary witness. All these causes, too, are in accordance with common law.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Debate *further adjourned* till *Monday* next.

IRISH LAND LAW BILL [*Lords*].

Reasons for disagreeing to certain of the Amendments made by The Lords to the Amendments made by the Commons, and for insisting on an Amendment to which the Lords have disagreed, *reported*, and *agreed to*:—To be communicated to The Lords.

MUNICIPAL REGULATION (CONSTABULARY, &C.) (BELFAST) [SALARIES].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Resolved, That it is expedient to authorise the payment out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of a portion of the Salaries of any additional Police Magistrates for the borough of Belfast, that may be appointed under any Act of the present Session to amend the Acts relating to the Royal Irish Constabulary, and to make provision for the appointment of a Watch Committee in Belfast, and for other purposes in relation thereto.

Resolution to be reported *To-morrow*.

TRUCK BILL.

Reasons for disagreeing to certain Amendments made by The Lords to which this House hath disagreed, reported, and *agreed to*:—To be communicated to The Lords.

SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE (SATURDAY).

Resolved, That the Sitting of the House on Saturday next be held subject to the Standing Orders that regulate the Sitting of the House on Wednesdays.—(*Mr. William Henry Smith.*)

House adjourned at twenty minutes after Two o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Saturday, 20*th August*, 1887.

The House met at Twelve of the clock.

MINUTES.]—SUPPLY—*considered in Committee*—CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES; CLASS V.—FOREIGN AND COLONIAL SERVICES, Vote 1—R.P.

PETITION.

CRIMINAL LAW—ISRAEL LIPSKI, CONVICTED OF MURDER.

MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.W.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present a Petition numerously signed by the inhabitants of Whitechapel and surrounding districts, including Clerkenwell, praying for the further respite of the condemned man Lipski.

Petition laid on the Table.

MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM: As the Home Secretary is not present, I wish to ask the First Lord of the Treasury, whether Her Majesty's Government have under consideration the additional evidence adduced since the trial, and think fit to grant a further period for inquiry?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I must again, Sir, protest in the strongest manner against any attempt being made to bring Parliamentary pressure to bear on the Secretary of State in the discharge of his solemn and responsible duty. He is acting under a deep sense of his own responsibility; and I again say in this House that nothing could be more injurious—nothing could more seriously interfere with the discharge of that important duty—than the attempt to bring Parliamentary pressure to bear upon him. With my right hon. Friend rests the responsibility of advising the Crown; and that responsibility ought not, in my humble judgment, to be interfered with by any attempt such as has been made in this House.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. COURTNEY) (Cornwall, Bodmin) said, he was somewhat surprised to find that the hon. Member had presented to the House a Petition that ought not to have been presented at all to the House of Commons. That Petition was addressed to the Secretary of State for the Home Department, and it should have been laid before him at the Home Office.

MR. SPEAKER: The presentation of the Petition to this House is altogether irregular if it be addressed to the Secretary of State, and no notice, consequently, can be taken of it.

MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM: With the permission of the House, I wish to say that I was not aware the Petition was addressed to the Secretary of State, and I must apologize for being out of Order. May I inquire what course I have now to adopt?

MR. SPEAKER: If the Petition be forwarded to the Secretary of State, no doubt it will be considered in the ordinary way.

MR. COURTNEY removed the Petition from the Table, returning it to Mr. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM, at the same time remarking, "It is addressed to the Secretary of State."

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY—CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES.

Supply—*considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Class V.—Foreign and Colonial Services.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum not exceeding £104,524, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1888, for the Expenses of Her Majesty's Embassies and Missions Abroad."

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I have given Notice of an Amendment which I propose to move to reduce the salary of Her Majesty's Consul General in Egypt by the sum of £500. I need hardly say, speaking of the efficiency of Sir Evelyn Baring, that he is worth the money paid to him; but it is necessary to make this Motion, as it is doubtful whether this is not the only Motion on which the general question of the administration of Egypt can be raised. I also make the Motion because I desire to record a protest on two points. The first has reference to what I may call the non-reduction and non-withdrawal of our civil administration from Egypt—that is to say, the administration through British officers as distinguished from native administration. Secondly, I wish to say a word or two about Egyptian finance, because, the other night, when the question of Egypt was unexpectedly and without Notice raised by the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere), the discussion was cut short by the Government giving the House to understand that they wanted to get into Supply, and because the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who repeatedly failed to rise until towards the close of the debate, made a somewhat *couleur de rose* statement the accuracy of which I, for one, am not prepared to admit. With regard to the non-reduction of British administration in Egypt, Her Majesty's Government—in fact, successive Governments of this country—have always professed a desire to withdraw from that country as soon as they could, leaving an efficient Native Administration behind them. Well, are Her Majesty's present Government taking any steps towards that object? It seems to me that they are taking absolutely none. An hon. Friend of mine, whom I do not see present, the hon. Member for Wednesbury (Mr. P. Stanhope), discussing the matter outside the House the other day, said with great truth—

> "If you want to withdraw from Egypt and substitute a Native Government the only way to do it is gradually to withdraw your British officers, and transfer the control to Native Authorities."

In that way he said—

> "The time may come when it would be possible to get out of Egypt if we only want to get out."

It seems to me that no Government of Her Majesty have really shown a desire to get out of Egypt since we went there. On the contrary, it would appear that we are every day more and more Europeanizing the administration not only with regard to European ideas but also with regard to administration through European officers. I will not say that the number of European officers is being increased in Egypt, but certainly there is not any diminution. We nowhere hear of European officers being withdrawn, and we nowhere hear of their salaries being reduced. As a matter of fact, it appears to me that these officers and their salaries are being maintained to the fullest extent. The hon. Member for Wednesbury also maintained as pretty strong evidence that so many British officers were not required in Egypt, that almost all of them manage to go away during the hot weather, and that at this moment nine out of ten of the British officers, who are supposed to be administering the affairs of Egypt, are in reality in this country enjoying an exorbitant leave such as they would never have got in India, or if they had been actively engaged in the administration of the affairs of any other country. They come home here in the hot weather, and it really seems that Egypt can get on quite as well without them. I, therefore, strenuously maintain that Egyptian administration is overmanned by British officials, that it is paying too much in regard to them, and that we are not taking the necessary steps to bring about an administration by purely Egyptian officials. I see no sign whatever that the Government are trying to establish a real native control of the affairs of the country. There are still less signs that the Government are attempting to call together a real Native Assembly under the decree promulgated by the Egyptian Government at the instigation of Lord Dufferin, because they know very well that an Egyptian assembly would never suffer to the extent that the present administration suffers for the sake of the interests of Europeans. With regard to Egyptian finance, and the remarks sprung upon the House the other day by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I sympathize very much with those hon. Members who assert very fairly that the surplus supposed to have been established in Egypt is altogether a bogus surplus—not a real one, but one manufactured partly through charging the expenses of Egypt on the loans. [*Cries of* "No!"] Hon. Members say, "No," but I contend that the expenses are charged upon the loans. I know that the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has maintained that the charges were justifiable, but, as a matter of fact, they were made partly on the loans and partly—and very largely—on the British taxpayer. That, I submit, is the very worst way in which they can manufacture a bogus surplus. I submit further that the fact that the Egyptians are not contented with our rule, but are harassed and dissatisfied with the burden of taxation imposed upon them, and especially with the land revenue is clearly shown in the despatches of our own Commissioner—Sir Henry Drummond Wolff—to Her Majesty's Government, and the declarations which have been made that the taxation ought to be reduced. Lord Northbrook showed the severity of the burden which has been imposed on the people of Egypt, and the report of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff tears to shreds the assertion so often made by Her Majesty's Government, that our rule in Egypt and our Egyptian policy are satisfactory to that country. So far from Egypt being contented with our rule they are eminently dissatisfied on account of the burden of taxation which it has imposed upon them. I will not again go over the question of the creation of the surplus through putting part of the charges on the loans, and part on the British taxpayer, but I think that in the interests of the Egyptian cultivator one word ought to be said upon the argument of the Chancellor of the Exchequer as to the non-remission of burdens declared to be unjustifiable, and from which the taxpayers might fairly claim remission. It is said that the omission to reduce the land revenue by £450,000 as promised was justified by the partial remission of the *corvée.* I decline to admit that we can set the reduction of the *corvée* against the non-reduction of the land revenue. It was the happy thought of a young gentleman employed as finance agent, who occupied his time cleverly cooking the accounts in order to establish a bogus surplus. I maintain that the partial remission of the *corvée* cannot properly be set against the land revenue for several reasons; and first, because the land revenue was collected and not remitted for two years subsequent to the year specified in Lord Northbrook's recommendation. The land revenue was collected, and the *corvée* was not remitted, and we have only now come to the time when it is proposed to remit a considerable amount of the *corvée;* and the argument is absolutely and wholly inaccurate in reference to the last two years. There is another strong reason why the *corvée* cannot be set against the land revenue. Lord Northbrook said that the severity of the land revenue has been most felt in Upper Egypt where the crops, consisting of grain, were affected by the fall in prices more than in Lower Egypt, where the crops are cotton, and produce a large revenue. Well, the *corvée* was remitted, not in Upper Egypt, but in Lower Egypt; therefore, if there is anything in the argument, it is merely this that because the taxpayer in Upper Egypt is taxed too much, a remission was made in the burdens of Lower Egypt, where the taxpayer is better able to bear the burden; and, accordingly, one class has been set against the other. That, I submit, is altogether a fallacious argument.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): The *corvée* has been reduced in Upper Egypt, though not to the same extent as in Lower Egypt.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: To some extent that may be so; but I took the words from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who explained that the reduction in Upper Egypt was not made to the same extent as in Lower Egypt.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): I never spoke about Lower Egypt.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: I am speaking in regard to the *corvée.*

MR. GOSCHEN: I never entered into the question at all.

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: It was I who referred to this point. I said that the *corvée* had been reduced to a larger extent in Lower Egypt, but that it had been reduced to some extent in Upper Egypt, where for several reasons it involved a lighter burden upon the cultivator of the land.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: That is all I said, and it is quite enough for my argument; the reduction of land tax was chiefly needed in Upper Egypt, while the chief reduction of the *corvée* is to take place in Lower Egypt. There is still another reason why we cannot set a personal tax against the land revenue. It is altogether a different tax, and we may as well set it against any other levy the Egyptian Government. What has happened is this—while the Egyptian Government professed to give a reason for not reducing the oppressive land tax in the manner recommended, they have succeeded in putting on the people of Egypt another personal tax. We have heard a great deal about the military service not being levied by conscription in the same way as in the past, and about a great gain having resulted to the people of Egypt in that way. But what has happened to the people of Egypt is this—the Egyptian Government have hit on another expedient for drawing large sums of money from the Egyptian people by levying a tax upon the more well-to-do Natives for exemption from Military Service. That is a large personal tax upon the Egyptian people amounting to about £250,000, just about the sum remitted on account of the *corvée.* I maintain that if we are to set one tax against another, the fair thing would be to set the new personal tax for exemption from Military Service against the other personal tax — the labour towards public works, which is said to be mitigated, or to some extent remitted. That would be fairer than setting the remission of the *corvée* in Lower Egypt against the remission of the land revenue which has not taken place. Under these circumstances, I strongly maintain that there is really no surplus in Egypt, and that, so far from there being a surplus, we have failed to remit the taxation which was shown to be oppressive, and have succeeded in imposing a new tax on the native population to the same extent as the remission of *corvée* which has been conceded to them. I do not know whether it is intended to have a debate on this subject alone. I rather think that my right hon. Friend the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs proposes, and desires, to have a debate upon the whole question of Egypt at once. With regard to the mission of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, I must say that, as far as Egypt goes, I have had considerable faith in Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, and I am anxious to see the whole of his Reports on the Civil Administration of Egypt. In the White Book, issued in July last, there were two Despatches—Nos. 96 and 97—bearing on that subject. I wish to know whether any further Papers are to be presented, as the Despatches that we have received up to now are just enough to make us wish for more. Sir Henry Drummond Wolff has shown sympathy for the people of Egypt, and has represented that we are placing an excessive burden on them, and that they are dissatisfied with the state of the country financially, and do not appreciate our highly civilized processes. But the last despatches are short and scanty, and I desire to know what information has been received from him since that period. Are we to have more information from him—really useful information—and to know what he really thinks of the situation? On both sides of the House we are anxious to see justice done to Egypt, and I want to know if there are any more of these despatches of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff. If such information were before hon. Members we might be wiser and a good deal nearer the evacuation of Egypt—for we are now a very long way from it. My hon. and gallant Friend opposite the Member for Finsbury (Colonel Duncan) has occupied himself very much with the reduction of the Egyptian Army. I have been led to believe that it had been very much reduced indeed, and that its spirit and efficiency were likely to be taken away. I was therefore very much relieved when I put a Question to the Under Secretary the other day to hear him say that it stands at 9,393 men. Well, I wish to know whether this number consists of soldiers, or whether it includes drivers, coolies, and so on.

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: It includes all ranks.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: All ranks; but does it include drivers and coolies?

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: No.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: I am glad to hear it; but I should like to know how these 9,393 men are to be paid, because no provision seems to have been made for them in the Budget. Hitherto they have been paid by the British taxpayer, and I want to know how they are to continue to be paid. We have had cooked accounts for two years and a surplus which was to enable us to satisfy the demands of the bondholders with a payment of 5 per cent; and I want to know how in future the Army is to be paid.

GENERAL SIR GEORGE BALFOUR (Kincardine): They are to be paid out of the Army Estimates.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: The British Army Estimates?

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: No.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: The Chancellor of the Exchequer knows very well that the cost of the British Army in Egypt is very much larger than the small contribution we expected to get from Egypt, and which, as a matter of fact, we did not get. I am quite certain that it is a charge upon the Estimates at the expense of the British taxpayer, although it does not so appear in the Estimates. I am glad to find that the Army of 9,393 is a more respectable figure than I had imagined; but is it the fact that that Army has been reduced during the present year; and, if so, have we any hope of leaving Egypt within a measurable time? It seems to me that it has been reduced because we have no expectation of withdrawing from Egypt. Sir Henry Drummond Wolff estimated that 10,000 men would be sufficient for the Army of occupation; but he was willing to come to a compromise by which the Egyptian troops and police together should amount to 16,000 or 18,000, and he was willing to accept 11,000 as a Native Army for the defence of the country. If the Government wish to withdraw from Egypt they should not only withdraw our troops, for whom the Chancellor of the Exchequer has to find the money, but also our civil officers, and they should not reduce but maintain in its full efficiency the Egyptian Army, so as to be able to defend the country. The fact has been pointed out again and again that Egypt is a rich country, having troublesome neighbours such as the Soudanese, and until we come to the Millennium it will have to be defended. She is a rich country, with a revenue of £9,000,000 or £10,000,000 yearly, and it is a monstrous thing that so little—not more than £130,000—is put aside for the purposes of defence. As to Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's negotiations at Constantinople, and the difference which has arisen between this country and France, the more I study the question the more it seems to me that a great error has been committed by Her Majesty's Government in not trying to make terms with the French Government before attempting to arrange with the Sultan. The French Government—not only one Government, but successive French Governments—showed every disposition to meet us in a friendly spirit on this subject, and they have gone so far as to say that on certain terms they would be willing to concede the right of re-entry on our part. One of the first Despatches in the White Book, No. 3, is from Lord Lyons to Lord Iddesleigh, and is dated Paris, November 9th, 1886. It refers to the result of a conversation with M. de Freycinet, and shows that the French Government were desirous of coming to friendly terms with Her Majesty's Government. The Despatch says—

> "M. de Freycinet said that it could be hardly necessary for him to repudiate the imputation that France desired that the English occupation of Egypt should be succeeded by a French occupation. Nothing could be further from the wishes or intentions of the French Government. What they wished was that Egypt should be restored to its old condition—that of an autonomous Province, having a Government of its own, under the Suzerainty of the Sultan."

In the next Despatch—No. 4—of the 13th of November, from Lord Iddesleigh to Lord Lyons, there was an account of an interview with M. Waddington, the French Ambassador, at the Foreign Office, in which there was this passage—

> "Coming to particulars, M. Waddington said that Lord Salisbury, in the course of a conver-

sation with him, had declared that, if and when we fixed a date for the withdrawal of our troops, we should stipulate that in case of disturbances arising in Egypt after we came away, we should be at liberty to return. This, His Excellency said, was a suggestion which would meet with much opposition in France, and which was certainly open to objection; but still he was authorized to say that in principle his Government were prepared to accept it, subject to certain limitations, and to a proper arrangement, such as he thought might be come to."

As far as we know, Her Majesty's Government did not attempt to come to terms with France; but persevered in sending Sir Henry Drummond Wolff to Constantinople. When he got there, he gave the French agent some idea of what he was about; but the French agent told him he had no authority to negotiate upon the subject. We come, then, to another Despatch, which also shows our relations with the French Government—No. 34. It is a despatch from Sir Henry Drummond Wolff to Lord Salisbury, and is dated Pera, March 4th, 1887. This is the despatch in which Sir Henry Drummond Wolff speaks of a conversation with the French *Chargé d'Affaires*, and it proves conclusively that the declaration of the French Government at later stages was correct—that they were willing to do their best to come to terms with us. This was not only the case in regard to one Government, but with successive French Governments. Sir Henry Drummond Wolff says, in his despatch—

> "Yesterday the French *Chargé d'Affaires* called on me to thank me for showing him the Memorandum I had presented to the Porte. He told me that he had no instructions or qualification to treat with me, that negotiations between England and France must take place at Paris or London; but his anxiety was so great to remove the one point of difference between the two countries, an anxiety felt equally by his Government, which had inherited it from M. de Freycinet, that he knew he should be carrying out their views by urging me to find some means of allaying the strong feeling of irritation which existed in France with respect to our occupation of Egypt."

Another Despatch of May 4th—No. 75—from the Marquess of Salisbury to Lord Lyons, is as follows:—

> "I had some conversation to-day with the French Ambassador respecting Egyptian affairs. He asked me whether it was true, as the newspapers reported, that Sir Henry Drummond Wolff had been instructed to propose to the Turkish Government that five years should be the period within which the withdrawal of the British troops should take place. I replied that that suggestion had been discussed, but that nothing was settled. To this His Excellency replied that his Government would be prepared to acquiesce in a proposal fixing the term at three years. I informed M. Waddington that this was a matter on which considerable difference of opinion existed in this country; but I impressed upon him that a stipulation for the re-entry of British troops in case of necessity was the point on which Her Majesty's Government most insisted, and that we had no intention of leaving Egypt until that had been conceded. His Excellency said that, in our previous conversation in November last, this point had been conceded in principle, and that all that required to be settled was the conditions under which the right was to be exercised. I replied that this was one of the cases where the principle was easily effaced by unfavourable conditions."

There the despatch ends; not a word more. It is clear from this Paper that the French Government went to the very utmost limit of concession—further than anyone would have expected them to go. They were willing not only to do everything to meet us in a friendly way, and to get rid of the irritation that existed between the two countries, but they also went so far as to say that, subject to certain conditions, they would concede to us the right of re-entry into Egypt. Then I say that the action of Her Majesty's Government in not coming to terms with France has been most unfortunate. It is impossible to settle the matter by Conventions with the Porte, or in any other way, until we have come to terms with France, and the mistake Her Majesty's Government have made in neglecting to come to terms with that country has been a great and almost fatal one. I have said again and again that Sir Henry Drummond Wolff is an able man, but there are blots in his despatches which prove that he misunderstands the Oriental situation in some respects. He speaks of the Egyptians as a feeble and fanatical race. I question the correctness of the description. I will not go into the question whether they are feeble; able bodied they certainly are; whether they are feeble minded I will not discuss; but I deny altogether that they are fanatical. I say that it is an entire mistake to call the Egyptian people fanatical. For generations Europeans have gone among them; they have submitted to Christian domination and Christian administration as the British people would certainly not have submitted to. It seems to me that if they have had a fault it has been in the nature of not being fanatical enough, and that they have allowed too many Europeans to settle among them and take upon them the government of the country. While I look upon Sir Henry Drummond Wolff as a very able man, I regret that he has espoused that absurd bugbear of the influence of the Sultan as the Caliph of the whole Mahommedan world. To a certain extent, the Sultan may be head of the Mahommedans of Turkey, as the Emperor of Russia is the head of the Greek Church, or the Queen of England is head of the English Church; but he is in no sense recognized as such in Egypt. When Sir Henry Drummond Wolff speaks as if the Sultan as spiritual head of the Mahommedans would be a source of aid to us in Egypt, I submit that the contrary would be the case. The people of the Soudan, for instance, so far from recognizing the spiritual authority of the Sultan as Caliph, hate the Turks, and look upon us as the allies of Turkey—as being no better than the Turks themselves. They call us Turks as a term of opprobrium. The whole foundation of the patriotic movement of Arabi Pasha was a dislike of the domination of the Turks, and a wish to establish the principle of "Egypt for the Egyptians." I very much wish that Her Majesty's Government would accept that principle of the patriotic Egyptians—a principle which has been enunciated by successive Governments, but which in practice has been invariably set at naught. I beg to move the reduction of the Vote by the sum of £500, being part of the salary of our agent in Egypt.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Item A be reduced by £500, part of the Salary of the Agent in Egypt."—(*Sir George Campbell.*)

Mr. MUNRO - FERGUSON (Leith, &c.): My hon. Friend who has just sat down, in discussing this complicated question, has made a variety of suggestions to Her Majesty's Government. I think the manner in which he has introduced the subject merits the commendation of the House because of the fair way in which he has put his views forward without the least Party bias in the matter. Of all questions, this is one which ought to be treated altogether apart from Party politics. I might, however, take exception, as one of the constituents of my hon. Friend, to one or two points in his speech, and I must enter a mild protest against the doctrine he has laid down, that we are more fanatical than the Egyptians. I must also demur to the views he has expressed in regard to the policy which France has pursued with respect to this question. Both sides of the House are more or less responsible for our policy in Egypt. The long and short of the matter is that we have come under certain obligations with regard to Egypt that bind us in honour to stay there until those obligations are fulfilled so long as we can fulfil them, and to stay there no longer. Our going there and the obligations we entered into were endorsed by the country five years ago. Hon. Gentlemen on this side of the House who voted against the policy of the Government were subjected to severe criticism for doing so, and therefore the evacuation of Egypt is not quite so simple a matter as it is sometimes thought to be. Our Egyptian policy is not the brightest page in our history, but if we leave the country without fulfilling our obligations, if we leave it in such a state of chaos and acknowledge our failure, then I venture to say that it will appear one of the blackest acts that can be perpetrated. At the same time, there is a general feeling that the bondholders are hanging on to that unhappy country like a lot of leeches, and I fear that there is only too much truth in that view of the matter. There can be no more clear case of injury and wrong than the manner in which Ismail wrung that unfortunate country and burdened its millions of inhabitants with a debt in the making of which they had no voice, and of which they knew nothing. I think the creditors of Egypt are entitled to extremely little consideration. They lent their money on indifferent security. They rushed forward to lend it, and they advanced it on a security the value of which has decreased. I do not think that Egypt can bear the burden of the interest of the debt which she is now paying, and if there is any loss the creditors of Egypt should suffer that loss. The general situation, in regard to the debt, is, I think, a very serious one, and I hope that Her Majesty's Government will be able to do something in the way of mitigating this burden on the country. With all this, one cannot keep away from the fact that Egypt, at all events, is as yet unable to stand on her own legs, and that some European power, on some pretext or other, is sure to go there if we withdraw. I hope that Her Majesty's Government will be able to give some definite assurance that as many Native officials as possible will be employed. There is, I know, great difficulty in finding a sufficient number of good Native officials, but the effort should be made to do that with as small a European staff in that country as possible. If then, some intervention, by some European Power, seems to be inevitable, I am of opinion that the work to be done can be done by us as well, if not better, than by any other country. My experience of Egypt is not very great for I was only there for a short time, but while I was there I took advantage of the opportunity to ascertain the views of as many Natives as I could, and I found that they all agreed that if there was to be foreign intervention they would sooner have that of this country than that of any other country. There has been an undoubted improvement in the country owing to our occupation, and I think that the Prime Minister gave a fair account the other day when he spoke of the amelioration of the condition of the fellaheen, and stated that the administration of the country under our occupation had become purer and more efficient. I trust that this country may be able to do even more than has already been accomplished for the benefit of the people of Egypt in the way of co-operation, and for relieving the Egyptians of that burden of debt which I have already alluded to, and in regard to which much still remains to be done. When the time does come—and it cannot come too soon, in my opinion—for the evacuation of that country, we ought to be able to show something for the torrents of blood that have been shed there, for the sacrifices we have incurred, and for the responsibilities which have been cast upon us by our occupation. As to the Mission of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, it has been a long one, as well as the bill for it; and I hope that the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) will feel it his duty to tax the costs. That Mission has never yet been shown to have been necessary, and the course pursued in sending out Sir Henry Drummond Wolff has never been justified. I do not mean, for one moment, to underrate the services of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff; but what is the use of employing first-class officials in Egypt and Constantinople at high salaries if they cannot do the work in those countries. In my opinion, the officials who were already in Egypt and Constantinople might have done the work which Sir Henry Drummond Wolff has done. The Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs has drawn the inference that the late Government approved of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's Mission, because they kept him there when they came into Office. But because the late Government used some restraint in the matter, it does not follow that they approved of the original Mission, or that they would ever have sent out a Special Envoy. It is not likely, I think, that we can promote continuity in our foreign policy if the restraint which was exercised in this case is to be used as a cloak to cover the mistakes of Her Majesty's present Advisers. I think that a strong case was needed in order to justify the Mission, and I hope a further explanation on that point will be given by the Government to-day. As to the branch of the Mission which was carried out at Contantinople, I am not disposed to attack the policy of dealing directly with the Turks. My hon. Friend the Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir George Campbell) who has just sat down, mentioned some French despatches; but there was a subsequent Paper, which is published in the last Correspondence—a Paper addressed to the Sultan by the Count De Montebello, the spirit of which is not quite the same as that which breathes in the despatches which the hon. Member has read. The Count De Montebello, in his Despatch, says that in case a Convention should be ratified, the French Government would devote their attention to the protection of their personal interests; that they would protect and guarantee the Sultan against all consequences, whatsoever they might be, which might result from the non-ratification of the Convention; and that as the disinterested policy of France could alone protect the Ottoman Empire against the encroachments and ambitious agents of England, the maintenance of this friendship would be considered by His Imperial Majesty as much more advantageous. We have heard a good deal about the European Concert. It is a difficult thing to maintain that Concert in Europe; but it is almost impossible to maintain it in regard to France. It has been said that we ought to have gone hand-in-hand with France upon this question. Unfortunately, our experience has been that it was altogether impossible to go hand-in-hand with her. The *corvée* has been alluded to by my hon. Friend. What course did France pursue with regard to the partial abolition of the *corvée*, which we endeavoured to carry out in order to lighten the load which has been placed upon the shoulders of the Egyptian people? The whole of the opposition we met with we received from the hands of France. As in Egypt, so elsewhere. France, in times past, has been giving us more trouble than all the rest of the world together; and until France is prepared to show a changed feeling—and I do not see any sign of that at present—it is impossible to talk of our being able to maintain that hearty understanding with her which we all wish to maintain. There is one very disastrous feature in the negotiations at Constantinople—namely, the delay in the departure of our Envoy after the date he had fixed. I think that in this case the Foreign Secretary allowed this country to drift into a most humiliating position. On the 4th of June, Her Majesty's Government consented to postpone the ratification of the Convention. This is the telegram which was sent by Lord Salisbury from the Foreign Office to Sir Henry Drummond Wolff—

"With reference to your telegram of the 2nd instant, I have to state that Her Majesty's Government cannot consent to postpone the ratification of the Convention; still less can they discuss the Convention with the other Powers before the exchange of ratifications."

The Government, however, soon showed that it did not need much pressure in order to postpone the ratification. The reason given for the delay is contained in a despatch from from Sir Henry Drummond Wolff to Lord Salisbury, dated July 8th, which says—

"The Austro-Hungarian *Chargé d'Affaires* called here this afternoon and showed me a telegram from his Government, of which he did not leave a copy, supporting strongly Rustem Pasha's request for a further prolongation of the term for exchange of ratifications. I am unwilling to refuse any request from the Austro-Hungarian Government, our relations with whom are of a very cordial character. I informed the Turkish Ambassador therefore that I would not object to a few days further delay, provided that some assurance reaches you which justifies you in thinking that ratification would then take place."

There is a further despatch from our Ambassador at Vienna, Sir Afred Paget, received on the 16th July, in which he says—

"Count Kalnoky mentioned to me yesterday the application which, at the request of the Ottoman Government, he had submitted to your Lordship for a further postponement of the exchange of the ratifications of the Egyptian Convention. His Excellency represented that he had only consented to be the intermediary for bringing this request before Her Majesty's Government on two grounds: (1) because it had been represented to him by Baron Calice that if a further delay was not granted, not only would the Convention not be ratified, but the Ministers who had negotiated it would be sacrificed; and (2) because he was informed that Sir William White and Sir Henry Drummond Wolff were both of opinion that for the above reasons it was desirable to give the Sultan a little more time."

The reason assigned in this despatch, that, if there was no further delay, the Ministry might not be retained in Office, was, no doubt, a consideration which carried very much weight with the people of this country. The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs suggested that it might have been occasioned by some ceremony that was required on the departure of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff. Nobody would have objected to that; but the reason that is assigned for the delay in the departure was that the Austro-Hungarian Envoy had asked for it, and that Sir Henry Drummond Wolff had asked the Austro-Hungarian *Chargé d' Affaires* to procure it from the Porte. We have often been told that all Europe bowed down when a Conservative Government came into Office. Perhaps the Under Secretary will explain, in the course of this debate, upon what special point the Government regarded their foreign policy with most pride? Is it their policy with regard to Bulgaria, or the New Hebrides, of which they have reason to be proud? The beginning of their policy in Bulgaria was marked by the kidnapping of the Prince of Battenberg under the very nose of the British Government. Do they pride themselves on the policy we have pursued in Turkey, where we have been flouted by the Turks, or is it that which has been carried out in reference to Zanzibar, where we find the French making great progress, notwithstanding the most strenuous efforts of the Conservative Government to restrain them? I hope, at all events, that we shall receive some assurance from the Under Secretary that our interests in the Pacific are not being sacrificed by European intrigue. I am certainly inclined to think that we shall hear much less in future of the advantages and *prestige* which this country has gained from our diplomacy. Lord Salisbury has said that he had a free hand. That was more than the Liberal Government ever had. They never had a free hand in Egypt, owing to our engagements. But as Her Majesty's Government have a free hand, we have a right to know how that free hand has been shown. Has it been exhibited in the Red Sea Littorel, or in regard to the garrisons there? I think we have a right to know what return the country is to expect for the responsibilities it has assumed and the sacrifices it has made.

MR. HANBURY (Preston): Now that the Mission of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff has practically come to a conclusion, I think it is time the country should have some indication from the Government as to what is going to be our exact policy in Egypt in future. With regard to the Mission of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, I am bound to say that I think it somewhat unjust that very much blame should be thrown upon Sir Henry Drummond Wolff himself for the failure which has taken place. I do not think it lies in the mouth of the Liberal Party to blame him for the want of success which has attended his Mission; because I recollect that when the Liberal Government had an opportunity of recalling Sir Henry Drummond Wolff they did not do so. In these days it is necessary to trace the responsibility home; and it would be most unjust to throw the blame on Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, because, after all, he was merely the mouthpiece of the Government. An Ambassador sent on a special Mission like this is just as much the servant of those who send him out as a lawyer is in drawing up a deed which is to enable a man to inherit land. If you cannot attach the responsibility to the man or to the system, you must attach it somewhere halfway between the man and the system, and I am afraid that position is filled by that abstract and somewhat invisible person the present Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. Now, what is the existing position? To begin with, there is no question of stopping permanently in Egypt at all. That matter was settled long ago, and therefore there is no use in talking of its being for the interest of this country to occupy Egypt permanently or to conquer Egypt. That question was settled by a Liberal Government long ago; and when we are told that we are not bound to accept their policy, I say if there is one thing we ought to agree upon it is that there ought to be some continuity in our foreign policy. That is more important than anything else; and we are bound, by certain pledges we have given, to evacuate Egypt. The only question is, whether our pledges are going to be real or sham pledges. I am bound to say that if we are only under a pledge to evacuate Egypt when we have educated the Egyptians in self-government that that is more or less a sham, and it puts us in a position which the people of this country do not understand. I believe they want to have our foreign policy made clear and distinct to them, and any Ministry which wishes to be backed up by the people of this country must make its foreign policy clear and intelligible. We only suffer in our contact with other nations if we fail to make our foreign policy clear and intelligible. Therefore, if our pledge is not going to be a mere sham, we ought to take every possible step we can, without further ado, to train the people of Egypt to self-government. The system of dual government and ownership going on at present in Egypt is indirectly doing this country great harm. To begin with, it is throwing a large amount of discredit upon us. It produces a notion abroad that there is something insincere in our policy in Egypt, and by that policy we are setting a very bad example. This idea of occupying a country, and not being responsible for it, is one which other countries will imitate, and, indeed, are beginning to imitate. The Russians may follow the example in Afghanistan and Bulgaria; and France is doing it already in the New Hebrides. That is partly recognized by the Foreign Office, because it appears that the Foreign Secretary is willing to discuss the New Hebrides Question and the Egyptian Question side by side.

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON: I have most distinctly told the House that while Lord Salisbury would not object to have these questions discussed together, he utterly declines to consider one as depending upon the other.

Mr. HANBURY: It is unfortunate then to allow them to be discussed side by side. In 1847 England and France pledged themselves most distinctly never to occupy a certain place, but the question became mixed up with the Newfoundland fisheries, and in the end France was found in occupation of it. I am glad to see that Sir Henry Drummond Wolff has given a definite form to the pledge we have given by naming a term of five years. What struck me when I saw the term of five years was, why five years? Was it to throw all the responsibility on the Government which might be in Office five years hence? I am bound to say that on both sides there seems to be a disposition to shirk responsibility, and to throw it on some Government which may be in Office five or six years hence. At any rate, it is a step in the right direction to show that we have some definite policy in the matter. But I want to know what is our definite policy with regard to Egypt? Are we going in for philanthropy, or are we going in for Empire? We have to choose between the two. If Imperial considerations can be urged in favour of occupying Egypt, I should be prepared to throw pledges to the winds, because, in my view, Imperial interests overrule everything. But the temporary occupation of Egypt for five years can be nothing better than a sham, because it is putting us on a wrong track and making us neglect our other Imperial interests which we might consider if it were not for the temporary occupation of Egypt. As to Egypt being a good recruiting ground for soldiers we know that there is hardly a man in Egypt worth having in any army. [*Cries of* "Oh!"] Well, I say so; and I say further that by our present policy we are alienating every power in Europe, and creating a feeling of distrust both in Russia and France, which may tell very severely against us some day before long. Our *prestige* is not increased by this temporary occupation—this sort of half ownership of Egypt—because we are tied and fettered and manacled by engagements, by treaties, and by protocols, by which no great nation in Europe ought to submit to be manacled and bound. As to increasing our credit in Europe, we have had to submit to so many evasions and so many limitations in regard to our policy that our *prestige* and credit have suffered rather than gained. Then, again, as to our military position, which is a very important consideration indeed. I have never heard, and no Government has ever put before us, what the exact idea of our Military and Naval Authorities is of what use Egypt is to us in a naval or military point of view. I think we are entitled to have some information of that kind. If Her Majesty's Ministers could tell us that our occupation of Egypt is of real advantage to the Imperial interests of the people of this country, I should go a long way with them in regard to holding Egypt, but the speeches which have been made in this House all go the other way. The noble Lord the Member for East Marylebone (Lord Charles Beresford) not long ago derided the idea of holding Egypt. He said he infinitely preferred that our Fleet as in olden times should fight in the open sea rather than rely upon the ditch, as he called it, which constitutes the Suez Canal. I have heard other naval officers take the same view of the value of Egypt in a naval point of view, and both naval and military men hold that we should be in a better position if we were to strengthen Gibraltar, Malta and Aden, and continue to hold the high seas, where, at any rate, we are invulnerable. I am, moreover, afraid that as a result of the course we are adopting in trusting so much to Egypt we are really neglecting our interests upon the Pacific and in the Persian Gulf, which may be vitally affected by the occupation or non-occupation of Egypt. I do not believe, therefore, that, from an Imperial point of view, we are doing ourselves any good by this temporary occupation of Egypt. Then, are we doing Egypt itself any good by our occupation of the country? It is said that we are stopping there from a sense of duty in order to train up the Egyptian people to self-government. I believe that there is a great deal of cant, and of very mischievous cant, in reference to this so-called training up of the Egyptians to fit them for self-government. I do not think we are doing anything of the sort, or that it is incumbent upon us to remain in Egypt, or anywhere else, for the purpose of training up the people in self-government. In my opinion the best way to train people to self-government is to leave them to themselves. They learn self-government much better if they are left to themselves. It is asserted that we are introducing some very valuable reforms into the administration of the country. I should be the last to deny it. No one who has read the Blue Book relating to Egypt can deny the truth of the statement, that in certain respects we have been introducing very valuable reforms in the Administration of Egypt; but what, however, I do not find any trace of is, that although we are Indianizing Egypt, as it were, and sending out our traders, we are making no attempt to train the people to self-government, although that is the object we profess to have had in going to Egypt. It is true that we sent out to them some very able administrators; but we did not attempt to train the people themselves to administer their own affairs. The first thing we did when we went to Egypt was to crush their independence and to crush their Parliament. We did that when we suppressed the revolt of Arabi Pasha. It is said that we have made marvellous improvements in the Egyptian Army; but one step we are going to take is to cut off £200,000 a-year from the sum spent upon it, which must have the effect of reducing its efficiency in some form or other. I venture to say that in that respect we are not doing much for the independence of Egypt, and, whether we do it or not, depends very much on the attitude of France. Then, again, as to the training of the Egyptian people in self-government, during the last four years, so far from throwing more power into the hands of the Egyptians themselves, the very contrary has happened. Where the salaries of the Foreign Officials in the country amounted to only £350,000 originally, they have increased now to nearly £500,000, being £460,000; certainly that does not show that, as a rule, we have succeeded in training the people to manage their own affairs. I am sorry to find so much of this mischievous cant—mischievous not only for Egypt, but for ourselves, and the only people who really benefit by it are the bondholders, for whom, as a class, I have no particle of consideration or sympathy whatever, because when they got high rates of interest, as they undoubtedly did, they could not have expected to get good security, and they must run the risk they voluntarily incurred. The two countries which derive the greatest advantage from our occupation of Egypt are France and Russia, who, I believe, do not wish us to leave, because by staying there we are creating distrust in the mind of Turkey, and affording an opportunity to France to occupy the New Hebrides, and to Russia to work her will in Bulgaria. Therefore, the result is, that we are adding nothing to our *prestige*, and the only people who are gaining anything are the French and the Russians. It is said that we are to leave Egypt at the end of five years, but during that period the Egyptian people will be kept in a state of uncertainty, which is the worst possible training for them, while our own position, at the end of that time, as far as leaving Egypt is concerned, would be no better than it is now. Shall we be in any better position to leave it then than now? I am afraid that during those five years we shall find ourselves in a worse position in Egypt than at the present moment. Next year a great strain will be put upon the finances of Egypt by the abolitian of the *corvée*, and the withdrawal of the £200,000 a-year. I do not see how the coupons are to be paid, and if they are not, we shall see the foreign bondholders represented by Foreign Ministers and others, sweeping down upon Egypt like birds of prey, and we shall have even more interference on the part of Foreign Governments in the future than we have had in the past. I honestly believe that the best policy which this country can adopt, if it does not really mean to take steps to train up the people in self-government, will be at once to withdraw from that country. If our pledges are not mere shams, and we really desire to train up the Egyptians to self-government, then I should heartily concur in the policy of our stopping in Egypt for a year or two longer. But I fail to see any signs of our training the people up in self-government, and if we do not intend to make our pledges real, instead of shams, then I maintain that the best thing we can do is to withdraw from the country as soon as possible; but, at the same time, to inform other Foreign Powers that they are not to go there in our place. I believe that if we had a clear consistent policy of that kind, we should have most Foreign Powers with us, for they have no desire to see us replaced in Egypt by France, while it would certainly receive the sanction of the taxpayers of this country. We should give France clear warning that if she did go in, consequences might follow which might not be pleasant, and everybody would then know exactly what our policy means, whereas at the present moment they do not know what it is, and they are getting sick of the question because they have no idea whatever what direction the policy of either a Liberal or Conservative Government may take.

Mr. PICTON (Leicester): I have listened with great pleasure to the speech of the hon. Member opposite, because I believe there is a fear growing up not only abroad, but in the minds of some sections in this country, that Her Majesty's Government intend to take advantage of the difficulties which they allege to exist in Egypt in order to remain in that country. The idea has also been growing that they intend to make a second India of it. I think that some means should be taken to correct that impression, but, so far from that having been done there are some passages in the last Correspondence in respect of Egypt, which go very far indeed to confirm that impression. At any rate, among these Despatches and Blue Books, there are several letters which are difficult to understand on any other basis, especially when we know the arts which are practised by diplomatists for concealing their real meaning. Yet we take, for instance, Despatch No. 8, which is a telegraphic despatch from the Marquess of Salisbury to Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, dated the 4th of June last. We read there, that unless the treaty which was then half completed is ratified "the position of this country"—that is Great Britain—

> "Will be entirely changed. Her Majesty's Government will be released from their engagements with the Porte in regard to Egypt and will remain free to take their own course."

We know very well that the Prime Minister did not intend for a moment to lead us to believe that engagements which have been entered into with other powers would be affected by the break-down of a treaty affecting Egypt. But, why on earth should that break-down affect our engagements with the Porte on the same subject? We make one engagement, and then ask another Power to make a second and third engagement, and if we meet with a refusal, then we say that our former engagements are to be regarded as nothing. Now, I know that this telegraphic Despatch has given rise to a great deal of uneasiness among many sections of the community, and is regarded as a declaration that this country will not be bound by previous engagements entered into with the Porte, because the Porte will not enter into a new one. That is the exact position of the matter in plain language, and certainly, it would appear from the language of this telegram, that unless the Turks consent to do just what we want them to do we will break our previous engagements. There are other despatches which go very much to the same purpose. For instance, No. 31, which is another telegraphic despatch from the Marquess of Salisbury to Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, dated June the 29th, says—

> "If the Convention falls through, either by non-ratification or owing to the refusal of other Powers to adhere to it, our evacuation will certainly be much postponed, and the date of it cannot now be foreseen."

This goes far to confirm the impression produced in my mind that we are to be regarded as being released from our promises as far as Turkey is concerned unless this new treaty is signed. There are a number of other despatches to the same effect. No. 45—a telegraphic Despatch from Sir Henry Drummond Wolff to the Marquess of Salisbury, dated July 9th, says—

> "His Majesty had been told that if he ratified the Convention, France and Russia would thereby be given the right to occupy provinces of the Empire, and to leave only after a similar Convention had been concluded. France might do so in Syria, and Russia in Armenia. Religious feeling had also been excited in the same direction. Under these circumstances, they begged me to advise them as to some formula by which these difficulties might be met."

Certainly what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander, and actuated by similar reasons—namely, self-interest, the same course of policy may be pursued by other Powers in other parts of the Empire. That seems to be a fair argument, and one which Sir Henry Drummond Wolff was fairly entitled to use. I trust to hear some plainer statement than we have heard hitherto upon the subject. Indeed, the whole of our experience in regard to Egypt shows that it is high time that some reform should be introduced into the relations between this House and diplomacy in general. I think it is very hard indeed that we should only now be asked to sanction the expenditure of money which has been devoted to purposes which many of us very heartily disapprove, and yet have had no means of meeting fairly. It would, therefore, be an illogical proceeding on our part to assent to this Vote for the salary of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff.

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: The Government are not asking for any money for Sir Henry Drummond Wolff.

MR. PICTON: We are asked to vote a sum of money for the Diplomatic Service, and included in that Vote I find a sum of £10,000 for Sir Henry Drummond Wolff.

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: I have already told the House that the money voted on a former occasion is quite sufficient for this Mission, and that no further sum will be asked for. The Committee are not asked, in the present Estimate, to vote any money for Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's Mission at all. The Vote now asked for is for other services altogether.

MR. PICTON: But the other services included in the expenditure of this money would not have entailed so large a sum unless this £10,000 had already been spent for the Mission of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff. At any rate, I do not think we should have been called upon to vote the money if Sir Henry Drummond Wolff had not been sent out to Constantinople. The same thing applies to the whole of our Diplomatic Service. The House of Commons is only asked to vote the money after all the mischief has been done. I do not think that that is a fair position in which to place the Representatives of the people, and I hope to see the day when an entire reform of the system will be made. Under all the circumstances, I shall vote, with a free conscience, against the item for the salary of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff.

SIR RICHARD TEMPLE (Worcester, Evesham): Although we are now approaching the end of the Session I feel bound to make a few remarks upon the discussion which has taken place today, and especially with reference to the interesting speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Preston (Mr. Hanbury). My hon. Friend asks why we are in Egypt—whether we intend to remain there, and especially whether we are going in for glory or for Empire? I submit that we are going in for neither the one nor the other. We are going in for a third alternative altogether, and that is duty. There are three courses—England, honour, and duty; and the third course has always been recognized by Englishmen from the days of Wellington and Nelson down to the present moment. We have been clearly told that we must make up our minds as to whether we are to remain in Egypt or to leave it. If it is considered that England has no longer a duty to discharge in Egypt, or that she is no longer able to fulfil the duty she has undertaken, then the sooner she leaves that country the better. She must even bear the taunt of "scuttling" out of the country. I am thoroughly in accord with what fell from my hon. Friend the Member for Preston, that the system of dual ownership in Egypt is doing no good to the people of Egypt or to England—no good whatever. If it does any good at all, that good is of a temporary, a transient, and an evanescent character. You may annex Egypt or not; you may exercise a protectorate over it or not; but at present neither one thing nor the other is being done. We are pursuing no definite course; we are neither governing directly, nor protecting without interference. Nevertheless, we have still a duty to perform. If we are going to adhere to what we have declared before Egypt, Europe, and the world, we must remain in Egypt for the present. Knowing the country well, I warn my countrymen that if we do our duty to Egypt we must remain there for a considerable time. There is no use in fixing five, 10, 15, or 20 years, or any shorter time. That is only creating what my hon. Friend deprecates—a period of uncertainty. My voice will always be raised for doing our duty, for standing by our declarations, for fairly calculating the cost, and taking the consequences. Holding as I do, for the reasons I have stated, that it is our duty to remain in Egypt, there is no use in going back upon old controversies, and no advantage in flogging a dead horse in the shape of arguments that have been answered over and over again. We are in Egypt somehow; this much is beyond doubt, and there we must remain for the present and make the best of the situation. That being my argument, I want to show how we can do this. We may try to educate the people of Egypt in the art of self-government. I wish the Egyptian Administration God-speed most heartily in that mission. If you think you can succeed in this, then by all means try it; but I, for one, am of opinion that if you accomplish the task you will achieve a unique thing in the annals of Asia. As for Egyptian Parliaments, Assemblies of Notables, Village Councils, and the like, if we think we can establish them at once we are very much mistaken. Perhaps, in the course of a few years, we may by gradual steps be able to do something; but if they trust to this I warn my countrymen that they may be placing their reliance upon what may prove to be a broken reed. We may, however, do a grand work in Egypt. I do not know whether the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) is in his place. If he is, I am anxious to assure him, in reference to all the doubts he expressed the other day as to the well-being of Egypt, and in answer to his inquiry as to what benefit we are conferring on the people there, that we are doing a good and valuable work if only we can make it last. I was delighted to hear what was said by the hon. Member opposite (Mr. Munro-Ferguson) as to the good reports which he gathered on the spot, both from officials and non-officials, announcing the good which we are conferring in every way upon the people of Egypt. Nor are those reports exaggerated; if anything, they are well within the mark. I know myself, from visits paid to the country, that we are doing yeoman service in Egypt for the cause of humanity. In the settlement of tenure, in the land revenue, in the provincial police, in the local police, even to village watchmen, in the education of the people, not only in elementary schools and classes, but in the higher branches of education, in the administration of justice, and in social matters, we are rendering great service to the Egyptian people, and rendering them fit hereafter to administer their own affairs. We are doing all this; and if we find that we have a hard task before us, and are subjected, politically and diplomatically, to censure, we must be content to bear that censure, and to continue our efforts with undiminished zeal and vigour, fortified by the consciousness that we are doing our duty, and conferring great good upon the Egyptian people. My hon. Friend the Member for Preston referred to the feeling of foreign countries on this question. Now, I have been a constant traveller on the Continent, and I know something of the feeling of foreign countries, and I venture to say that the views my hon. Friend has expressed are altogether illusory. Russia, I think, likes our staying in Egypt, perhaps for reasons of her own. As to Germany, I would confidently appeal to every Englishman who knows the Germans whether Germany has anything to gain by our leaving; and Austria has not the slightest objection to our staying there. Assuredly, Italy, seeing that she has designs of her own in Upper Egypt, does not object to the presence of England in Lower Egypt. Then, who alone objects? My hon. Friend alludes to France. He seems to think that France rather likes our staying in Egypt, because it helps her designs in the New Hebrides. Not at all. I am confident, from my knowledge of France and French diplomacy, that France does not like our staying there. France, then, is the one and the only nation that has the slightest objection to our remaining in Egypt; but I submit that we cannot commit a dereliction of duty for the sake of conciliating France. No doubt, France has morally every title to consideration from us; it is a great thing to conciliate her; but there is no good to be gained in doing so by making unworthy concessions, or by the abnegation of duty. As to our military position in Egypt, there was a great deal of truth in what was said by the hon. Member for Preston about our fundamental policy being to increase our power in the Mediterranean by strengthening Malta, and in the Red Sea by strengthening Aden. We must not trust too much to what a great naval authority in this House has called the ditch of the Suez Canal. We have other and better routes in the open ocean. Admitting to the full everything that may be said against the employment of a large force for holding Egypt, I venture to say that if Her Majesty's Government took the views of the highest naval and military authorities they would find a universal consensus of opinion that the occupation of Egypt is not a bad thing for our Eastern Empire. It gives us great *prestige* with our Native Mahommedan subjects all over the world, because, although a Christian Power, England has the largest number of Mahommedan subjects among all the Asiatic Powers. So far as our naval position is concerned, I freely admit that it greatly depends upon the neutralization of the Suez Canal. By neutralization I understand the Canal being closed to all Naval Powers in the event of war, and I admit that our naval position must materially depend upon the utilization of the Suez Canal or not. I confess that I have never yet been able to find out what is to be done with the Canal in the event of war. But, be that as it may, of all countries in the world I believe that it would be the easiest for England to occupy Egypt. I venture to say that, with our power in the Mediterranean, with the possession of Gibraltar and Malta, Alexandria and Port Said, a very moderate European force could hold Lower Egypt, which is all the part of the country we should think of occupying. A limited force at Alexandria, a small garrison in the citadel of Cairo, a detachment at Ismailia, midway in the Canal, one or two ships of war at Alexandria and Port Said, with the Mediterranean Squadron constantly cruising about, would suffice for the purpose. We have, in fact, as I have said already, got to make the best of it. After all, considering that Egypt is the highway to the East for our commercial enterprize; considering, also, that our traders and our capitalists — not the bondholders, but the trading and enterprizing capitalists—have a large stake in the country, we must do our best there, and I think it will not be a very bad thing for England if she has to perform that great duty.

MR. P. STANHOPE (Wednesbury): I am glad the hon. Baronet who has just sat down has been so frank in stating his views with regard to Egypt. I hope, at all events, it will have the result of eliciting from Her Majesty's Government some expression of opinion as to whether or not they are in accord with the policy which the hon. Baronet has just sketched out for the future government of Egypt. The hon. Baronet has told us that, for 20 years to come, we may probably look forward to maintaining our position in Egypt. I hope the public will consider whether the despatch of Lord Salisbury to Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, dated the 29th of June, in which he held the Porte responsible for our occupation of Egypt, is in accordance with the statement of the hon. Baronet. I do not believe that the people of this country would look forward with calm contemplation to the period of occupation which has been indicated by him. If we go back to the declaration of the late Government, we shall find that it means that we have decided, as soon as possible, to evacuate Egypt. What is the meaning of the term "as soon as possible?" If it means that the Government is to come to the House of Commons every succeeding Session, and tell us that a great many improvements have still to be made in that country, and that we must remain there until they are finished, that, I say, is not evacuation "as soon as possible" in the sense in which the term is generally understood. We must make up our minds to leave Egypt without delay, and I believe that the steps taken by the present Government and by the Government of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) for our gradual withdrawal have been in the right direction. But I hope we shall take some further steps to relieve the Egyptian people of the excessive charge for the present Civil administration of the country. I wish to call attention to the supposed enormous benefits which we have conferred on Egypt in connection with the Civil administration. I have a knowledge of Egypt extending over a period, at all events, equal to the time spent in that country by the hon.

Baronet opposite. I am acquainted with most of the public works in Egypt, and I know most of the Native statesmen and European officials who are at present in that country; and while I have to admit that, generally speaking, we have given an honest character to Egyptian administration, I maintain that we have done so at a charge which I do not think the Egyptian people should be called upon to bear. They have now, for instance, a Financial Department, and we have in that Department a Financial Adviser, probably a competent official, who receives a salary of £2,000 or £3,000 a-year; we have an Assistant Minister of Finance; and, again, we have another gentleman, Blum Pasha, also a most competent official, well acquainted with the needs of the country. I venture to say that the Financial Department of Egypt can be very well performed by any one of these gentlemen alone. Then the Railway Department is administered by three gentlemen, an Englishman, a Frenchman, and a Native, all of whom are in receipt of heavy salaries; and I say with regard to this Department, also, that it can be perfectly well administered by one official. Then there is the Caisse de la Dette, which is a most expensive, incompetent, and certainly a most irritating institution for Egypt, interfering as it does with every branch of the Administration. I think if we were to take the opinion of our officials in Egypt upon the subject, it would be found that they unanimously condemn the constitution of the Caisse de la Dette. In addition to these there are the Department of Customs, the State Domains, and the Daira, in which three are a number of officials all receiving high salaries at the cost of the Egyptian people. I venture to hope that Her Majesty's Government will, in making a military withdrawal, also make a civilian withdrawal from Egypt. I hope they will diminish the number of highly-paid and unnecessary European officials, and, as far as they can, train up such Native talent as is available for the purpose of filling these posts. I am certain that even now there exists in Egypt a large number of young men whose knowledge is sufficient to enable them to fill these posts, and who would discharge the duties of these offices at smaller salaries, while, at the same time, they would give greater satisfaction to the Natives of the country. It must not be supposed that the Egyptians are particularly pleased with seeing every post in that country filled by foreigners; and I have no doubt that in this respect the Egyptians have the same feelings as Englishmen, Irishmen, and Scotchmen with regard to official positions in their country being filled by people of their own race. I must protest strongly against the system of imposing upon the Egyptian Administration all kinds of highly-paid officials, whose appointment has generally been the result of a desire to perform a job in the interests of a particular individual. Then I think that the Government should take up the question, which is a very important one, of the Capitulations in Egypt. At present you have an institution, which I admit works well—the system of international tribunals; but the business of these tribunals is very much restricted by being confined, as it is, solely to disputes between Natives and foreigners. You have side by side with these tribunals Native tribunals, which I think are, on the whole, making satisfactory progress, and which I would like to see put into a more important position, so as to take the place of the international tribunals, which, after all, are only an interference on the part of Foreign Powers with the administration of justice in Egypt, and cannot be regarded as permanent. Then, above all things, there is the important question of occupation. I hope Her Majesty's Government will not regard the question of Egypt from the point of view of the hon. Baronet who has just spoken. I cannot well understand how the hon. Baronet is satisfied, from his experience of official opinion in Russia, that Russia is anxious that we should remain in Egypt. I have myself some knowledge of Russia and of Russian statesmen, and I must say that I have never heard from the latter one expression of opinion favourable to our remaining in Egypt; and I should be very sorry if England were to give to Russia an example of bad faith and breach of agreement with regard to the occupation of Egypt, an example by which I am afraid that Russia or any other Power would be glad to profit. I think we should not regard the French people in this matter as more or less hostile; but that we should approach them in a spirit of confidence and goodwill, and endeavour to come to some terms of arrangement by which we should be enabled to evacuate Egypt with satisfaction to ourselves and to them. I do not believe this would be an impossibility; I believe we might come to an arrangement under which, while foregoing any special privileges in Egypt, we might obtain from France some concession with regard to the reduction of debt, and consequently the remission of taxes, which would be the very greatest boon to the people. I will go one step further. I have never been able to see why Egypt should not be neutralized and placed under the guarantee of Europe in the same sense as Belgium is under that guarantee at the present moment. It is not too much to expect that Egypt, inhabited by a gentle and pacific race and having men of experience amongst its Administrators, might be, within a shorter period than is generally expected, able to conduct its own affairs with credit and success, so that the country might continue an independent State under the guarantee of Europe, and, free from foreign intrigues and influences, perform its duty as guardian of the Suez Canal and commercial communications with the East. I do not regard that as by any means an impossible eventuality; and, for the reasons I have stated, I must protest in the strongest language against any further prolongation of occupation of Egypt. This is a subject on which I believe the English working classes have a very strong opinion indeed. I do not agree with the hon. Baronet opposite that the English democracy desires to continue and make permanent our occupation and responsibility with regard to Egypt. I think, on the contrary, it is every day more apparent that, while we are anxious to keep what we have and to strengthen our hold on what is honestly and really our own, we do not desire to extend our responsibilities or charges in connection with them, nor break faith with Europe as we should be doing, by endeavouring to effect a permanent occupation of Egypt, of which we are only the temporary guardians.

MR. DE LISLE (Leicestershire, Mid): After what has fallen from hon. Members with regard to the policy of Her Majesty's Government in reference to Egypt, I may, perhaps, be allowed also to approach the same subject, and to say that the remarks of the hon. Gentleman who has just spoken seem to have as much force and consistency as we are accustomed to expect from gentlemen who profess to be Radical idealists. The conditions of existence which the hon. Gentleman supposes might possibly be realized in another state of things; but, as the world is now constituted, I do not see any chance of his views being carried out. As an example, the hon. Gentleman says he would like to see Egypt made a second Belgium. That might be possible if he could transfer the population of Belgium to Egypt; but his suggestion cannot be looked upon as practicable, having regard to the fact that the Egyptians have been a conquered and effete race since the days of Cambyses. The hon. Baronet the Member for Evesham (Sir Richard Temple) has spoken of an occupation of Egypt extending over a period of 15 or 20 years. I think that is a wise and statesmanlike suggestion, because I believe that the next 15 or 20 years will see a great revolution in the East. Our policy in the past has been to maintain the integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire; but I believe, if we look at the state of affairs in the civilized world, we shall find that the main idea which dominates every Cabinet in Europe is to effect its painless extinction. If we look at the political game going on in Europe we shall see that the mind of every European statesman is occupied with the question as to who is to share the plunder when the Ottoman Empire falls to pieces. We Englishmen do not want to attack an ancient Ally, nor do we wish to hasten the process of disintegration which is assuredly going on; but I think our duty imposes upon us the necessity of remaining in Egypt, because when the shadowy suzerainty of the Sultan fades away it will rest with us to preserve law and order for the Egyptian people. I cordially agree with the hon. Baronet the Member for Evesham that the true perception of duty is what ought to guide every politician; and, happily, with us the term "duty" is synonymous with the cause of civilization and freedom, not only in regard to the British Empire, but throughout the world. It is our duty, as well as our pleasure, to do what we are doing in Egypt—namely, to enable the people to enjoy such amount of Constitutional government as they are capable of. I believe our occupation of Egypt has been long enough to show that the people of Egypt are incapable at present of governing themselves in the true sense of the word. Although they are a dark race, and are intellectually and physically our inferiors, I do not wish to be understood to mean that so long as their country is in the hands of Europeans they cannot do a good deal in the way of government; and I hope the Government will not say one word which will propagate the idea that we are about to leave Egypt and abandon our position there to some other European Power at an early date, which would be the certain result of an "Egypt for the Egyptian's" policy. I cordially agree with the hon. Baronet when he says that he is disgusted with sham professions of speedy evacuation. I think that these are not only injurious to the honour of this country, but especially damaging to the interests of the Egyptian people. The one thing which is required in Egypt is a sense of safety. The people want stability in their institutions, and to exist under a Government that will give confidence to the investors of capital. Egypt was the granary of the world in the days of the Pharaohs; it remained one of the fairest portions of the earth until the Turkish conquest and occupation; and there is no reason why it should not be so again under stable government. France is, no doubt, jealous of our occupation of Egypt; but she must accept the accomplished fact. We are there, and she has retired; she has her own ideas with regard to Tunis and the North of Africa, and she need not be jealous of our remaining in Egypt. On the other hand, Russia has no desire to see our departure; she has her own programme. She is, of course, an aggressive Power, and intends at no future date to absorb the whole of Central Asia, and I do not believe it will be worth our while to contest it with her. For my part, I should be glad to see the Valley of the Tigris restored again to the condition described by Xenophon. Lastly, I think that Austria and Germany will be glad to see us remain in Egypt; and, with a great statesman who has enjoyed, and will for many years enjoy, the confidence of this country, I believe our true policy is to cultivate the friendship of the Teutonic Powers of Europe. We should, in my opinion, be condemned by posterity if we were to take any step towards withdrawing our influence from Egypt at a time when we are doing our best to promote the welfare of the country. Sooner or later the Ottoman Power will disappear; if we do our duty now we shall then have an indisputable right to remain in Egypt, and the Sovereignty of the Pharaohs will lapse to the Crown of England.

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.): I think it is to be regretted that, on an occasion when due notice has been given that a debate would take place on the question of the occupation of Egypt, so few Members should be present in the House. If there is one thing more than another which is confirmed by history it is that the origin of wars has always sprung from times in which it has been impossible to get the people of the country to take an interest in the situation. I think it is unfortunate that when a question of great importance, not alone to the people of Egypt, but to the people of England, in their relation to the Powers of Europe, there should be such a deplorable absence of Members from this House. The great difficulty, in approaching this question of Egypt, is that it is a matter for a volume, and not for a speech. It is a question which cannot, within the limits of a speech, be approached in such a manner, at any rate, as will make it intelligible. I propose only to deal with three chief points in the observations which I have to make, and which ought permanently to be before the public in connection with the Mission of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff. The first of these points is the relations of this country to France as regards our occupation of Egypt; the second is the question of the exile and continued detention of Arabi Pasha; and the third point I wish to deal with is one of the utmost importance, which I have over and over again brought forward in this House without receiving upon it any satisfactory reply from the Government—namely, the fact that the reduction of the Land Tax of Egypt to the extent of £450,000 a-year, which was recommended by Lord Northbrook in 1883 as absolutely essential to the welfare and lives of the people of that country, which was embodied in the Financial Agreement of 1885, and in the Imperial Decree which followed, has never been granted to the Egyptian people. It is by withholding that reduction of £450,000 a-year that you have shown a bogus and unreal surplus, out of which you have paid a portion of the Coupons of the Egyptian Debt. You have, therefore, robbed the unfortunate fellaheen in order to have enough money to pay the bondholders. I take the first question of our relations with France in connection with our occupation of Egypt, into which it is, of course, manifestly impossible to enter in full detail. I would venture to refer hon. Members who take an interest in this matter to the despatches which passed between Lord Granville and M. Waddington in the month of May, 1884, because those despatches are of extreme importance, as bearing on the good faith and present action of the Government of England, in considering the attitude adopted by Lord Salisbury—namely, that of requiring the signature of the Convention as a condition of the evacuation of Egypt by England. A preliminary interview took place with regard to the Financial Convention of 1885; and M. Waddington subsequently wrote to Lord Granville requesting that their understanding should be put into writing, in order that there might be no mistake about future negotiations. They drew up a Memorandum—No. 11 in the Despatches, Egypt, 1884—which Lord Granville stated actually represented their intentions. In that Memorandum it was stated that M. Waddington declared to the then English Foreign Secretary that the Government of the French Republic was inspired by the confidence that Her Majesty's Government would conform distinctly to the solemn declarations made on repeated occasions that they would do nothing to prejudice the international situation of Egypt, which was secured by Treaties and Firmans. This was the basis of the understanding between England and France. But by the 5th Article of the proposed Anglo-Turkish Convention the present British Government proposed to sweep away the existing international relations of Egypt, and to substitute for them an entirely new system; and because the French Government, in a friendly way, refused to consent to our having the right of re-entry into Egypt after evacuating the country—a matter which was never discussed between the Representatives of the two Powers, and which utterly alters the international situation in Egypt—they are told by Lord Salisbury that this frees the hands of the English Government from the pledges and solemen engagements, over and over again repeated, between the two countries. Lord Granville stated, in a despatch dated the 15th of June, 1884, that he was delighted at the French Government's consent to abandon the old control, as it enabled the two nations to enter into a frank exchange of views; and he goes on to say that—

> "Her Majesty's Government will, at or before the expiration of the English occupation propose to the Powers a scheme of neutralization based on the principles obtaining in the case of Belgium."

We have heard the hon. Member for the Loughborough Division of Leicestershire (Mr. De Lisle), who has appeared to-day as a great authority on foreign affairs, declare that no sane man could talk of making Egypt a second Belgium; but here it was laid down by Lord Granville and M. Waddington, the Representatives of France and England, in the most solemn manner that the English Government would make proposals for the neutralization of Egypt on the same basis as that on which Belgium now stands.

MR. DE LISLE: Perhaps the hon. Member will allow me to say that I never asserted that Lord Granville was a sane man in every sense of the word.

MR. DILLON: I say that France is entitled to assume that the word of Lord Granville, when he spoke as Foreign Minister of England, binds this country, and that England would not within three years of that declaration, if her Imperial Dominion pointed in that direction, be prepared to scatter to the winds every pledge and understanding that we have given to the European Powors. If an hon. Gentleman like the Member for Leicestershire (Mr. De Lisle) stands up and declares that a Foreign Minister of the day is not a sane man, I say we must not be surprised if the French Government look upon these proceedings with the greatest disgust. Lord Granville declares in the same despatch that the evacuation of Egypt would be effected, if not before, at latest in the early months of 1888. I would direct the attention of hon. Members to the wording of some of the despatches in connection with what I have read from the despatch of Lord Granville. Sir Henry

Drummond Wolff announced from Constantinople on the 31st of May that, according to the information received from the French Ambassador, although the French Government would not take any exception, on the whole they objected to the right of re-entering Egypt. This was an entirely new principle; and although they protested against it in the first despatch in a friendly way only, there was nothing to lead this Government to suppose that the French Government would allow this country the right of re-entry. I will now turn to Despatch No. 18, in which Lord Salisbury uses words which are utterly inconsistent with the previous understanding arrived at between this country and France. In acknowledging the telegram from Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, Lord Salisbury points out as essential that—

> "Her Majesty's Government have no intention of leaving Egypt without having ample security that the social order which they have established there is no longer endangered by external attack or by internal trouble."

That, I think, is the first time the term "social order," that we have been so accustomed to in the case of Ireland, is brought into this question. This is an entirely new departure. The language of Lord Salisbury is most vague and indefinite. Who is to be the judge of whether there is ample security that "social order" in Egypt is no longer endangered by external attack or by internal trouble? Is it Sir Evelyn Baring? Then there is the Despatch No. 31 of Lord Salisbury, which has already been quoted—a most menacing despatch, and one which will be heard of over and over again on the platforms in the country unless we get a satisfactory answer from the Government on this subject. In this despatch Lord Salisbury says—

> "If the Convention falls through by non-ratification, or by the refusal of other Powers to adhere to it, our evacuation will certainly be postponed, and the date of it cannot be foreseen."

This, in plain language, means that if the ratification falls through our departure will be indefinitely postponed, which is only another way of saying that there will be a permanent occupation of Egypt. But I venture to say that the people of this country will not be deceived by any such language, and that if our occupation is to be prolonged the question of Egypt will become like that of Ireland, a burning question in this country. I do not wish to detain the Committee, but I desire to say a few words on the subject of the great injustice that has been done to Arabi Pasha. I think it is a cruel thing that this man has been put out of public sight for so many years; and until justice is done it will be the duty of Irish Members year after year to remind the House and the British Government what are the facts in his case. Let me recall the memory of the House to the circumstances. When Arabi Pasha was taken captive he was put on his trial on three charges; first, he was charged with being accessory to the incendiary fires in Alexandria; in the second place, he was charged with rebellion; the nature of the other charge I do not remember at this moment. Two of the charges were withdrawn, and the only charge proceeded upon was that of rebellion, of which Arabi Pasha was no more guilty than any Member of Her Majesty's Government. For political purposes it was considered necessary by the English Agents that Arabi Pasha should admit the charge of rebellion; and he was warned that, unless he did so, he would be abandoned to the Egyptian Government, who would have him shot without any trial at all, and to the charge of rebellion he therefore pleaded guilty. It was distinctly understood that he should be banished to a country to be arranged upon by his friends, and he was given to understand that his banishment would not be perpetual, but that in a short time he would probably be recalled to Egypt. It is a monstrous thing that this man, who was really a patriot, and did his best to serve Egypt, and would have continued to serve if you had let him alone, should be condemned for the remainder of his life not to see the country which he loved and served so well. Nothing can be more monstrous than to suppose that Arabi Pasha was guilty of rebellion. He was, at the time of the bombardment of Alexandria, the recognized War Minister in Egypt; and not only was he that with the consent of the Khedive, but shortly before that time a Special Commissioner of the Sultan, who had come from Constantinople to arrange the affairs of Egypt in connection with the British Government, confirmed him in his Office of War Minister, and decorated him. Up to the date of the bombardment of Alexandria and the landing of the British troops, Arabi Pasha was acting with the full approval of the Khedive; but when the British Government got hold of the Khedive they compelled him to declare Arabi Pasha a rebel. I am compelled to ask this question. If Arabi Pasha was a rebel, against whom was he a rebel? Is it that he was a rebel against the bondholders? I will tell the Committee—he was in rebellion first of all against the kourbash; he was in rebellion against the excessive taxation of the fellaheen, and against some of the abuses which you have succeeded in crushing out. There is not a single reform that has been instituted by the English Government which was not part of the programme of Arabi Pasha, and which he was not in process of carrying out when you committed that most outrageous thing recorded in English history—namely, the bombardment and burning of the town of Alexandria, with no excuse under the sun. Arabi Pasha before the bombardment of Alexandria wrote a letter to *The Times*, in which he appealed to the good feeling of the people of England, and said that every exertion in his power was being made for the preservation of order and for the protection of the Egyptians. In spite of that this unhappy man was treated as a rebel. Now, I ask if it is not time for the English Government to act with some generosity towards this man? If there is a scrap of honesty in the declarations of the English Government, that they wish the people of Egypt to govern themselves, is it not high time to bring back the one man who can gain their good feeling and confidence? If you want a strong man on whom you can base a good representative Government in Egypt, I do not know where you can go if not to Arabi Pasha. I have seen enough lately of the generosity of the mass of the people of England to make me believe that if they were to support an appeal for the release of Arabi Pasha, that appeal could not be resisted by the Government. If the Government will not give us some hope that they will do justice, however tardy, in this matter, I say that as soon as the Irish Question is off our hands—as it very soon will be—I shall make a further appeal to the people of England on behalf of Arabi Pasha. The hon. Member for Mid Leicestershire (Mr. De Lisle) has announced to us that the people of Egypt are a dark race, and inferior to Europeans in intellect. I have never been in Egypt, but I have known many who have been there, and I protest against any such doctrine as that which the hon. Member has laid down. I think it is a monstrous and outrageous doctrine to say of the people of Egypt, that they are a race only fit to be treated as slaves. I am, however, obliged to the hon. Member for Mid Leicestershire, although the Government will not be, for supplying us with a test of the policy of the Government, and also with the means of telling the people of England what is at the bottom of this policy of Egyptian occupation. The Government go on the doctrine that Egypt is to be kept down; that her people are to be robbed and treated as an inferior race. When the proper time arrives, we shall appeal to the people of England on that issue, and ask them whether they wish to be parties to any such transaction.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I entirely agree with my hon. Friend the Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) in respect to the case of Arabi Pasha. There is no instance which history records of a more iniquitous political imprisonment than that of Arabi Pasha. I do not think the present Government are responsible for it. I am sure they are not. The Gentlemen who are responsible for the imprisonment of Arabi Pasha are my hon. Friend the Member for South Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce) and his Colleagues.

MR. BRYCE: I was not in the Government.

MR. LABOUCHERE: Oh! he was not in the Government at that time. Then he is not responsible, but his Predecessor was responsible, and the Government which he joined was responsible for the imprisonment of Arabi Pasha. I know what the plea is, because it has been frequently put forward in this House. It is that Arabi Pasha and his colleagues were banished from Egypt by the Egyptian Government, and that we cannot interfere. That answer has been given to me when I have asked questions on the subject. Obviously we are responsible entirely for what the Egyptian Government does, and if we said to the Egyptian Government "these men ought to be allowed to go back to

Egypt," they would be allowed to do so. I think it is a most vicious principle to allow our Colonies to be converted in this way into prison houses for persons who rightly or wrongly—I think Arabi Pasha was in the right—quarrelled with the Government of the country to which they belong. I hope that Her Majesty's present Government, in view of the fact that they are in no sort of way responsible for Arabi Pasha and his friends being sent to Ceylon, will look into the matter strictly, and will use their best efforts to bring about some arrangement by which these men may be, if possible, allowed to go back to Egypt. I see sitting there the Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst). When he occupied a seat in this part of the House he spoke very strongly of the iniquity of imprisoning Arabi Pasha and his friends; and as he is now sitting near the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) I hope he will repeat to him privately the excellent reasons he gave publicly in the House for Arabi Pasha being released. Now, with regard to the Mission of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, which is the direct question before the Committee, I admit that Sir Henry Drummond Wolff is a most able diplomatist. At the same time, I think his Mission and the Treaty which was the outcome of the Mission were radically at fault in this—that we did not act with Europe in the matter. I do not mean to say that the Treaty was secret, but that the Treaty was made in a private fashion; it was not made in concert with Europe. With regard to Egypt we ought to act in concert with Europe; and, under these circumstances, we should not go privately to the Sultan and endeavour to conclude a Treaty with him. That Europe was opposed to it we know perfectly well. So far as I can see from the despatches, the first intimation of what was going on was obtained by France and Russia from the Turkish Government themselves, and no sooner did they know what we were contemplating than one of the strongest protests which I have ever read on the part of a friendly Power was put in against our action. I object to this separate action on the part of England—it is contrary to all principles we have ever initiated in the East; and if we take upon ourselves to induce the Sultan to make a concession or arrangement that is opposed to the views of Europe, we may be certain that Russia, France, and other countries will seek to do the same. The most important despatch which has been written by Sir Henry Drummond Wolff is Despatch No. 96. It seems to me upon reading that despatch that it is admitted by Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, who was sent out by the present Government, that we are in an absolutely vicious circle in Egypt. On the one hand, we say we will not leave Egypt until the Egyptians show that they are perfectly contented and satisfied; and, on the other hand, according to the despatch itself, we are acting in such a manner that the Egyptians cannot be contented and satisfied. That practically means that we shall stay there for ever. If the Government do intend to remain for ever in Egypt, it would be more reasonable to say so than to pretend to Europe, and occasionally to this House, that we are anxious to leave Egypt, and then make the conditions so impossible for Egypt that we can never leave the country. I hope the Government will consider well what Sir Henry Drummond Wolff has said. I should like them to tell the House specifically whether they agree or disagree with the despatch of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff in which he says the Egyptians are overtaxed, and that further taxation must produce discontent; and, in the event of their agreeing with it, to tell us what they intend to do? Do they intend to act upon Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's recommendation, which is that taxation should be reduced, or do they intend to go on as now, which to all intents and purposes means that we are acting there in order to render it impossible for us to leave the country? We hear a great deal about the benefit of our presence to the Egyptians. We are told that the Egyptians—I think the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) used this argument the other day—are less highly taxed than before. The taxation, taking the Budget as an authority, is somewhat less than it was in the highest year of the Khedive Ismail's Government. But it must be remembered that at the time the Khedive Ismail was there, there was a nominal taxation and a real taxation. The object of the Khedive was to put the revenue nominally as high as possible in order to induce persons to subscribe to the Egyptian loans. As a matter of fact the taxation was not really levied. I very much doubt whether one-third was really levied in the country; but now whatever the taxation may be —I think it is £5,000,000 sterling—it is *bonâ fide* taxation, and levied. I quite admit that there is a more regular system of government now than before. There may be many minor abuses done away with; but at the same time there is a more grinding oppression now than then, because now the taxation, which is almost the same as in one of Ismail's years, when I think it rose to £10,000,000 sterling, is levied from the people; therefore they are paying infinitely more than they ever did under Khedive Ismail's Government. I am exceedingly glad to think that common sense in regard to this matter has reached hon. Gentlemen opposite. We have the hon. Gentleman the Member for Preston (Mr. Hanbury), who has come forward as one of the unmuzzled Ciceros alluded to by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen), and a very able speech he has made on the matter. He has asked, what are you doing in regard to representative government? He has pointed out that you have increased the number of European officials, but that you have done nothing to teach the Egyptian people the first elements of representative government. Then we had a speech from the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Evesham Division of Worcestershire (Sir Richard Temple), who believes he himself might, perhaps, in the course of 15 years, be able to give the Egyptians some notion of representative government; that anybody else would require 25, but that he could do it in 15 years. If we persist in our present course, there is no chance of their ever learning anything of representative government. It is said we are going to teach them how to manage their own affairs; and yet we have a Member of the Conservative Party pointing out that we have done nothing—that our present system is not one which will sow the seeds of any species of self-government. Under these circumstances, I should also like to ask the Government what they have to say for the plea that they are trying to establish some sort of local Egyptian Government? Are they doing so, or are they not? If they are not, how can they ever hope to be able to leave the country? Then we have been told that punishments are less, and that the kourbash has been abolished. I believe the kourbash has been abolished; but I recollect the case of an English regiment being marched into a village, and proceeding to flog half the inhabitants. That hardly seems consistent with the abolition of corporal punishment. It seems to me that it would rather lead the Egyptians to believe that corporal punishment was part and parcel of the Constitution of Great Britain, for I myself do not understand why an English regiment should be sent into an Egyptian village to flog the inhabitants any more than it should be sent into an Irish village or an English one for that purpose. Nothing shows more strongly to what horrible expedients we are obliged to have recourse. We have our Army there, and we endeavour to maintain what we call order, in defiance of the fact that we are doing the best we can to create discontent and dissatisfaction. I have not been in Egypt for seven years; but, from what I can learn, we have not got much to show for the occupation of the country. We are certainly not there for the benefit of the Egyptians. I take what Sir Henry Drummond Wolff says; we have paid him a considerable sum for giving us his views with regard to Egypt, and I suppose we may take his views as being the views of the Government. The view Sir Henry Drummond Wolff has laid down in his own despatch undoubtedly is that we are not there for the benefit of the Egyptians, but there to place the Egyptians in such a position that they must be discontented with our rule. We are told we are there to maintain the integrity of Egypt—a very good thing undoubtedly; but I have never understood why the British taxpayer should be called upon to pay money for such an object. We have put ourselves entirely in the wrong with Europe; we have a very good idea of what France and Russia think. What is to be lamented in this case is that France and Russia are in the right, and we are in the wrong. I was reading last Sunday an article in *The Observer*—the Committee knows that *The Observer* is edited by a very able gentleman, Mr. Edward Dicey. What does he say in regard to the speeches of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) and the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson), in which it is asserted that we are simply in Egypt for the good and benefit of the Egyptians themselves? Mr. Dicey says it is all nonsense; that the Government would do much better, if they intend to stay there, to state the real reason why we are there; and the real reason must be that it is our road to India. I should like them to tell us what is the real reason why we stay in Egypt. I have asserted, and I still assert, that there was a meeting of the Naval and Military Authorities, at which it was held that it was perfectly useless to hope to keep open the Suez Canal for ships of war, and to send our merchandize under convoy by the Canal, or to send our troops by the Canal in the event of our being at war with a great Mediterranean Power unless we were in occupation of Egypt. This is the main reason for our stay in Egypt. But an enemy of ours might at any time say to some captain whose ship was possibly not worth more than £50,000—"We will give you £100,000 if, when you are going through the Canal, you will scuttle your ship." Such a thing as the scuttling of a ship would close the Canal for three weeks. As a matter of fact, we have Cyprus on the one hand—I regret that we took it—we have the Red Sea on the other, and we can hold the Canal against any Power in the world. We can by our hold, mainly in the Red Sea, prevent any ship of war belonging to the country with which we are at war passing through the Canal. That ought to be our policy, and that we ought to be perfectly satisfied with. You will say then what is the use, which I cannot see, of having an Army in Egypt? We can close the Canal, and we should close it in the event of war. What should we do with our Army? It would be in the air. We should have to send an Army merely to invite some Mediterranean Power to send another Army to endeavour to send us out. We should have work enough to do to defend India. The Government say we are there in order to benefit Egypt; but they do not even admit the risk in case of war of having an Army in Egypt, an Army which would be unsupported so to speak, and which would be snapped up because it would be an unduly small Army, by some Foreign Power. Anyhow, we should have to defend Egypt; we should have to isolate a vast number of troops there, and the whole thing appears to me to be an utter mistake. I should like some gentleman connected with the Army or Navy to tell us whether they really do believe Mr. Dicey is right, and that it is any advantage to us with regard to our road to India to occupy Egypt; whether, in the event of war with any great Naval or Mediterranean Power, it would be any advantage to us to have an Army in Egypt. I believe it would be a serious disadvantage to us, and one of the reasons which I am opposed, and always have been opposed, to our holding Egypt in this way, is that it would very much endanger the safety of the Empire in the event of war. Let us hear from the Government what they have to say on this matter. They are exceedingly vague upon the point. They put forward one reason for our stay in Egypt, and then they put forward another. One never can follow them. I never have been able to pin these gentlemen to any specific statement as to whether we are really in Egypt for the benefit of the Egyptians, or for the benefit of ourselves, or for the benefit or safety of the Empire. I do hope the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) will not follow the bad example set him, but will plainly and distinctly tell us whether he adheres to what he said the other day—namely, that we are in Egypt solely for the benefit of the Egyptians, or whether we are there in order to maintain our road to India, which, I say, is a false road, because in the case of war we should always have to go round by the Cape.

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON (Manchester, N.E.): I stated exactly the reverse. When concluding my speech I stated that undoubtedly the paramount consideration for us in regard to our remaining in Egypt must be the interests of this country.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: I am glad he says so, because I have no doubt I have convinced him it is not our paramount interest to remain in Egypt. Let some military man tell us whether strategically it would be advantageous in case of war for us to occupy Egypt or not, and whether it is necessary, in order to maintain our position in India, that we should do more than close the Canal to all foreign ships of war. We are told that if we leave Egypt France will go there on financial grounds. I confess that, looking at the amount of money that Egypt has cost us, it will only be a *damnosa hereditas* for the French. I cannot see any practical objection to the French going there, and I think they would very soon be tired of it. They might get some slight *prestige* by being in Egypt; but I am not a very great believer in the *prestige* of nations. I perfectly admit that the French and the Germans and others have put forth the plea that Egypt must pay the interest on their debt, and if they do not pay it there ought to be some interference on the part of the Great Powers of Europe. I quite admit that they hold very strong opinions in favour of the Egyptians being forced to pay this interest—their feeling on this point is as strong as that of Her Majesty's Government, indeed stronger. We are in Egypt, and undoubtedly France does wish us to withdraw, and it seems to me it would be quite possible to negotiate our withdrawal on condition that Egypt is made perfectly neutral, and that in the matter of these debts it were agreed that Egypt should either pay or not pay as she pleases. If we were to retire from the place on these conditions I do think we might obtain some assurance or guarantee from France and the other Powers that no Power should go there at all. Now, I do not wish to exaggerate the matter at all; but one of the factors that led us to go to Egypt at all was the powerful influence of the bondholders. Undoubtedly, the bondholders still have a powerful influence; but the Government, and the Government which preceded it, never would grasp the nettle. The Government have got into a mess. The Government which preceded this was continually saying that it was not their fault that we were in a mess, but that it was the fault of their opponents. But we were there, and no Government had the moral courage to take upon itself to say it would withdraw entirely from the position. We had got into a false position, and because we were in it we endeavoured to maintain it. I think that not only good faith, but our own interests, oblige us to withdraw. I do not understand this system of saying we will withdraw and yet we will come back if it be needed on the part of Egypt, or if there is any desire on the part of the Egyptians that we should do so. We went there with a clear and distinct understanding that our occupation would not be a permanent one, but that we would withdraw. Our good faith is at stake on the side of our withdrawal, and yet now in this Convention we practically assume a species of protectorate over Egypt, and we want to have exceptional rights there. If we simply look at the thing as one of the European Powers, and not as a Power wishing any exceptional rights, I cannot help thinking that we should come to some sort of an arrangement that we should be able to withdraw from Egypt, and be able to induce the European Powers to assent, not only to the neutralization of the Suez Canal, but also of Egypt. The question I particularly want to put to the Government is—"What are you going to do in face of Despatch No. 97 of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff." You are there faced with a statement of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff that you are forcing from Egypt an extortionate taxation, and that from the fact of all these bonds being held out of the country you are positively ruining Egypt, for you take from the country one-half of its entire Revenue. No country can stand such a drain. If half our Revenue were taken away we know perfectly well that we should be ruined. Now, are you going to stand upon the advice of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, your own Agent in Egypt, or are you not? I do hope the Government will feel that they are not bound by the Act of their Predecessors—that they will feel they have *carte blanche* so far as evacuation is concerned. I am persuaded, from my observations at meetings in the country, that the Conservative electors, as well as Liberal electors, are most anxious that a settlement should be come to. They could understand it if the Government said they meant to stay in Eygpt; but they do not like the present shilly-shally policy; they do not think the policy now being pursued by the Government is calculated to promote the interest of Europe, or of Egypt, or of the British Empire.

Sir ALGERNON BORTHWICK (Kensington, S.): The hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) has brought the debate back to practical ground. Hon. Members who have spoken previously have treated the Committee to a good deal of ancient history, and as though, in some respects, there was a near approach of the Millennium. From these extremes the hon. Member has brought us back to the real facts of the case. The hon. Member wishes to know why we are in Egypt. We are distinctly there to serve British interests. We are there because Egypt is the Charing Cross of the world—the great centre of traffic. We have 80 per cent of that traffic, in connection with which we are in Egypt doing police duties; and we must do it so long as any danger to the prosperity of the country is involved. We are there to serve British interests, and we are there, I hope, for the benefit of the Egyptian people, though I confess that I do not see we have as yet accomplished as much as we ought to have accomplished. I notice that during the occupation of Egypt wealth has increased on the banks of the Nile in certain instances. This is due in great measure to the English gold that was left there owing to our late Expedition; but beyond that, out of Egypt itself, and for Egypt itself, no demonstrable benefit has yet occurred. It is a small country, with 6,000,000 of population, taxed almost beyond the power of bearing the taxation—a country which has been plundered from time immemorial. From these limited resources £5,000,000 or more is taken annually and poured into foreign coffers; £5,000,000 going from that small cultivable land—from a country whose whole imports and exports amount to only £20,000,000 sterling—is a burden under which the country is now groaning. To the relief of that burden we have not brought our proved financial capacity, for I am persuaded that we might easily so arrange the affairs of Egypt as to secure a great remission of taxation. Instead of that, we have been hampered by our position; we have been hampered by our changes of Government, and by our many negotiations with Foreign Powers; and instead of relieving the Egyptians, we have overborne them with a number of highly-paid officials, who, to a certain extent, have done mischief instead of good by standing in each other's way. If we wish to evacuate Egypt, the first thing we must do is to enable Egypt to stand by itself. Have we done this? I protest that we have done exactly the contrary. If we wish to remain in Egypt, then we ought to organize the country in a manner becoming British intelligence, and consonant with British justice. And we are not doing that. We are neither doing the one nor the other. It is impossible that Englishmen can be in a country without a certain amount of substantial benefit flowing from their presence—such as the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) alluded to when he spoke of the state of the prisons, and many other beneficial arrangements which have been made in Egypt since we went there. But we harass and hamper the Government of the country. We do not allow it to negotiate with Foreign Powers about those Capitulations that are so inconvenient to it, and we will not negotiate ourselves. The one chance we have had is, to my mind, through the two Conventions of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff. In the first Convention we obtained the permission of the Sovereign Power to be in Egypt. That gave us a *locus standi.* By the second Convention we obtained still larger advantages, and I regret that it has not been carried out. But, as it has not been carried out, we must remain for the present as in the past, but, I trust, in a different spirit, and more in accordance with the wishes of the Egyptians themselves. There is an immense number of reforms which ought to be carried out if we remain in the country. It is unjustifiable that we should remain there without consulting the Egyptians themselves, and without carrying out the reforms which we are there to carry out. The state of their finances has been cruel to them in the extreme. The lands to which I have alluded as being so heavily burdened have been sold up by those "gombeen men" whom they have in Egypt in the persons of the great body of bondholders. They have sold up the lands in Egypt to the extent of nearly £1,000,000 a-year in the last two years, and these lands are almost unsaleable now that they are unable to bear taxation. These hardships perpetrated upon the population could not dispose them to look with kindness upon our rule, and I am perfectly certain that the Egyptians have not yet learnt to appreciate—as I think they might if we were to set about it in a different way—that we are really thinking of their interests. As it is, and as far as our interests are concerned, there is no doubt—I do not speak as a soldier—that strategically that country is of vital importance to our trade connection with the East. A picture has been drawn by the hon. Member for Northampton, who is himself no soldier, of the position of an army "in the air;" and the hon. Member supposes that we would have a large English Army there in case of foreign war, and without any supports whatever. English Armies from the beginning of history have always derived support from the soil, or from their Allies, or from aid that has been arranged for. In Egypt it is obvious that in any case of difficulty we could not only draw soldiers from India, but if we were there with the consent of the Sultan we could also have the aid of Turkish arms in defending the country; and such a combination as that would resist almost any difficulty that would be presented to the soldiers of England and their leaders. My only intention in taking part in the debate was to raise a voice on behalf of the poor fellaheen. I believe that these poor creatures, who have suffered through centuries, should at last understand that if they are under the protection and under the direct government of so great and so well-intentioned a country as this, they are justified in looking to us for better treatment, substantial and financial, than they have yet received at our hands.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): I think it is to be regretted that this Vote should have come on at so late a period of the Session, because there is really no one of the many questions which this country has to deal with, either at home or abroad, that is of greater magnitude, and might become of greater danger, than the question of our position in Egypt; and it is much to be wished, therefore, that there should have been an attendance in the House proportionate to the gravity of the question, and one from which an expression of opinion would have had its proper effect upon the minds of the Government. The debate has ranged over a great number of subjects. I hope to say a few words upon the most particular of these questions—namely, what is our present position in Egypt, and what are the steps to be taken towards evacuation? I must, however, say a word about the negotiations which Sir Henry Drummond Wolff has been conducting, and which we have not hitherto had an opportunity of discussing. It is not of much use criticising or condemning the Convention. The Convention is dead, and it is like shelling an abandoned town to point out the faults and follies which lay in the Convention. But although the Blue Books have little practical interest now, and although they do not tell us very much about the real position, there is one point on which they are very interesting. They seem to have been put together by the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) with a view to dramatic effect, because the first Blue Book tells the story of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's successes and triumphs, and the second Blue Book tells us the story of his more rapid fall. In the first of the Blue Books we see him working on the Sultan and his Ministers, and rolling Sisyphian stone up the steep incline of Turkish obstinacy and procrastination; and the second tells us why the same stone came down again very rapidly and landed at the bottom, where the Special Mission landed, in a morass of ridicule and humiliation. We are all agreed as to the nature of the special Mission. It was invented in order to find something for Sir Henry Drummond Wolff to do. We are all agreed that the Convention was devised in order that there might be some excuse for his staying there so long.

SIR ALGERNON BORTHWICK: Why did you not withdraw him?

MR. BRYCE: I am very much obliged to the hon. Gentleman for having asked that question. I answered it in the last debate upon this subject. We did not withdraw him for the very reason dwelt upon by the hon. Member for Preston (Mr. Hanbury). We thought it very undesirable that as soon as a Ministry came into power, finding negotiations in progress and an Envoy on the spot, we should immediately produce a breach in the continuity of policy by forthwith recalling that Envoy before we had any knowledge of what had passed, and what the Mission was likely to effect. The hon. Member for Preston taunted us with not having withdrawn Sir Henry

Drummond Wolff; but, at the same time, he dwelt upon the necessity of continuity of policy. We knew when we came into power in February, 1886, that our tenure of it was very uncertain, as events proved; and we felt that we should not be justified in suddenly recalling an Envoy who had been sent out by our Predecessors, and who had already concluded a Convention, and who was carrying on further negotiations. We never approved of the sending of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff; we always thought it absolutely unnecessary. If it had rested with us we should certainly have recalled him; but knowing how short our own tenure of Office was likely to be, we felt it would be an unfortunate step, and one which might expose us to just blame, if we were forthwith to recall him, and interrupt all that had been going on in Egypt and at Constantinople. Now, we have had very different accounts as to the value of this Convention. In the debate on the 9th March last the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) adjured us not to refuse the Vote for Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, saying that that gentleman was conducting most important negotiations—I think his words were "negotiations of the utmost value"—that France and Russia were behaving very amiably, and would very likely ratify the Convention which was being prepared. The House yielded to the entreaty of the right hon. Gentleman, and the Vote was passed. When the question came up again the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs deprecated the Convention, and said too much must not be made of it. Lord Salisbury has said, in a speech, I think, delivered in the country, that "it matters very little whether the Convention be ratified or not." I put it to the Committee whether, in face of those recent declarations of the Government that they attached so little importance to the Convention that it does not signify whether it is ratified or not, there is anything to show for the long duration of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's Mission but the very heavy expense it has entailed upon the country? We are happily now at the end of this costly joke, but I do not know that we should have been at the end of it now if it had not been for the pressure this House put upon the Government to recall Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, because his long continuance had made us the laughing-stock of Europe. It was perfectly clear as early as the 26th June, as hon. Members may see by turning to the Papers, that the Turks did not intend to ratify the Convention, and it was absolutely certain on the 1st of July that there was no chance of ratification. Sir Henry Drummond Wolff was kept there until the 15th July, and possibly might have been there still, but for the sentiment the country was beginning to show on the subject. This is now past history; but there are some points on which it is necessary to say a few words, because they are errors which may be repeated. Let me point out what were the mistakes which may be repeated. Let me point out what were the mistakes which in our view were made. In the first place, it was a great mistake to send Moukhtar Pasha to Egypt at all. When he arrived there he had long discussions as to the Army, and he was found advocating a larger Army, and when the Convention had been negotiated he worked against it, and against Her Majesty's Government. Only the other day, about a week ago, we saw a telegram stating that France had sent out to Constantinople a series of despatches containing instructions or directions which were to be submitted to Mukhtar for his guidance. It looks as if we had in Moukhtar in Egypt a very unfortunate and, perhaps, troublesome focus of intrigue. I think his position there was very unfortunate for ourselves—one which made it more difficult for the Government to carry out the reforms they desired to see, and which thwarted the Government in attempting to negotiate the Convention. It is easy to get the Turk into Egypt, but not easy to get him out again. Why did Her Majesty's Government allow an Envoy of the Sultan there whom it may now be found impossible to withdraw? The second fault which I have to find is that Her Majesty's Government began by negotiating with the Turks. It is quite clear the real difficulty in this matter does not lie at Constantinople, but lies at Paris. It really would have been better if, as was suggested by M. Waddington as far back as the Autumn of 1886, at which time these two Blue Books begin, there had been an arrangement made with France. France, as appears by the despatches, was then willing to consent to an English re-entry in case of need. It appears from a despatch of Lord Iddesleigh as if such an arrangement were possible, but Her Majesty's Government refused. I think it is perfectly clear that France was then holding a view in regard to the possible re-entry of England entirely different to that subsequently held by Comte Montebello after we had entered upon separate negotiations with the Porte. It would have been better, because, as the result proved when France chose to interfere she was able to prevent the ratification of the Convention. As soon as France appeared on the scene, and began to work on the mind of the Sultan and his advisers the special mission went down like a nine-pin—there was no longer any question of ratification. I put it to the Committee whether, even supposing it was known France would refuse to consent to our re-entry, it would not have been better to have ascertained her views beforehand, and to have saved the disappointment and humiliation of these long and fruitless negotiations throughout which Her Majesty's Government seem to have shown very little knowledge of the method of Turkish diplomacy. If we had come into contact with the Turks for the first time Lord Salisbury and his Envoy could not have shown more simplicity and less knowledge of the way in which Oriental diplomacy is conducted than they appear to have shown in these negotiations. The third complaint we have to make against the conduct of the Government is that the Convention contains a proposal for the joint occupation of Egypt by England and Turkey. I shall very likely be told that would not have happened, for the Turks would not really have occupied Egypt, but that when the time came for sending their troops along with ours their troops would not have been ready. It is, no doubt, possible that might have happened, but we cannot tell. Such an arrangement might have been the means of enabling the Turks to re-occupy Egypt, and the re-occupation of Egypt by the Turks would have been to sacrifice everything that has been gained. It would have been a thing most alien to the feelings of the Egyptian people, and would most likely have tended to undo whatever reform has been accomplished. The idea of the Turkish Government in Egypt affecting any reforms as like the idea of harmonizing fire and water. Now here, Sir, I think we may leave Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's Mission with the recollection, however, of the bill we shall have to pay for it. Now, I want to say a word or two about the condition of Egypt itself. I believe that, in spite of what has been said to-night by several hon. Members on both sides of the House, there has been an improvement in the condition of Egypt. It may not have been nearly so great an improvement as the authors could have wished or might have expected; but I believe that on several points the condition of the people is substantially better than it was, and that the sentiment of the people towards us is not, on the whole, a sentiment of hostility. Lord Salisbury, speaking at Norwich—I do not think he would have ventured to use the same words in the House of Lords, where he could have been contradicted—claimed that all the improvements in the state of Egypt were due to the Mission or to the presence of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff. Can any claim be more baseless than that? Hon. Gentlemen opposite know perfectly well that whatever improvements there are in the state of Egypt are due to the policy which was begun in 1884, and which has been carried on persistently by every Government since then. I do not take any more credit in the matter to the Liberal Government than to the Conservative Government; but it was the Liberal Government of 1884 which began these reforms, and whatever amelioration there has been in the state of Egypt is as much due to the efforts of the Government of 1884 as to anything that has been subsequently done. But, Sir, I cannot see that the benefits claimed from the negotiations of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff have been any greater as regards our position towards Europe than they have been in regard to our position towards Egypt. Lord Salisbury claims that they have shown our good faith with Europe, and, in some mysterious manner, set us free. Lord Salisbury said—

> "If the Convention falls through, either by non-ratification or refusal of the other Powers to adhere to it, our evacuation will certainly be much postponed, and the date of that cannot now be foreseen."

He was claiming that the non-ratification of the Convention with the Porte would have the effect of putting us in a different position as regards Europe, and he made the same claim as regards the Turks. He said that the non-ratification by the Turks would have the effect of releasing us from our engagements with the Turks. Surely there is a complete mistake in the statement of the case. It is true the offers made to the Turks would fall through if the Convention were not ratified; but all pre-existing engagements, all pre-existing assurances as to our intention to evacuate, and our determination to take no gain for ourselves out of our position in Egypt, would remain entirely unaffected by the failure of the Convention. If I have got a contract with you, I may offer a fresh contract, and you may consider it, but, if you ultimately refuse it, it does not release me from the obligations of the pre-existing contract. Our position, in spite of Lord Salisbury's claim, is exactly the same towards the Turks as it was before this Convention began. The only difference is, as far as I can see, that the Convention contained an expression of our wish to evacuate Egypt.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will allow me to say that I stated to the House, on the occasion of the last debate, that what Lord Salisbury referred to in saying our engagements were at an end was simply the engagements under the Convention which were conditional.

MR. BRYCE: That is not what Lord Salisbury said. His words meant a great deal more than that. The noble Lord said—

> "The position of this country will be entirely changed. Her Majesty's Government will be released from their engagements with the Porte in regard to Egypt, and will remain free to take their own course."

Now, these are very large words, and they are not sufficiently explained by saying they refer merely to the negotiations in respect to the Convention, because it is obvious they do not. Lord Salisbury's words must be taken to have a wider meaning, and to apply to the whole position of this country in regard to Egypt. Now, Sir, it is also claimed that we have given a proof of our good faith to the Nations of the world. I do admit that Her Majesty's Government gave that proof by their fixing a date for evacuation, which has always been refused previously, and I believe they made that proposition in perfect good faith; but, unfortunately, we are not taken at our word. It is not believed even in Constantinople, or in Paris, or, I am afraid, in Egypt, or perhaps in the other countries of Europe, that we are sincere in what we say about evacuation. I believe we are in accord in the desire to leave Egypt; but I do not think other Governments give us much credit for that desire. I believe that they think that when we get up and talk about evacuation we are acting a solemn comedy, and that we do not intend to evacuate, but that we only say we do in order that our statements may be read in foreign countries. We know that is untrue. We know that we all desire to evacuate Egypt, and I am sorry that the negotiations in connection with this matter do not seem to have altered the opinion of Europe in that respect. Now I come to the question of the future; and I have one or two queries to put to Her Majesty's Government. Are we going to leave Egypt; and, if so, what steps are we taking in order to bring about the evacuation of the country? We have heard a great many different opinions to-day as to the reasons for our staying in Egypt. I think that in this way we have had one of the most illustrative debates out of the many that have taken place about Egypt, because several Conservative Members have, from their point of view, put different objects before us. They have asked what is our reason for staying in Egypt? Each of them has given the reason they individually assign. The alternative was put very well by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Preston (Mr. Hanbury) when he said we might stay either for Empire or philanthropy, and he concluded to his own satisfaction, and I think to that of most of us on this side of the House, that neither Empire nor philanthropy in this case was sufficient to require us to remain in Egypt. Then the hon. Member for Mid Leicestershire (Mr. De Lisle) gave us his reason, which was that there will probably be a break up of the Turkish Empire, and then we could lay hold of Egypt—that when the Turkish Empire is broken up into pieces we may pick up some of the pieces. Then we had a most impressive speech from the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Evesham Division of Leicestershire (Sir Richard Temple). He said that we are staying in Egypt neither for philanthropy nor for Empire, but solely for duty, though he subsequently explained duty to mean practically what we call philanthropy. Then we had the speech of the hon. Gentleman the Member for South Kensington (Sir Algernon Borthwick). He said we stayed in Egypt for the sake of British interests. That hon. Member has put it perhaps in a sharper and neater way than anyone who has gone before, because, although he spoke of sympathy for the fellaheen, the ground which he took for our remaining in Egypt was that our interests required us to keep our grasp upon the centre of trade, and, as I think, he also desired to convey the centre of military strength. I believe we are in Egypt for none of these reasons, but simply because having made certain improvident engagements. engagements which we should not make again if the matter were to be done over again, we have never yet been able to see our way to get out of the country. The engagements were made by both parties in this House. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] But, as hon. Members challenge me, I shall have to say what I did not intend to say, and that is that they are chiefly due to the conduct of Lord Salisbury's Government in 1878 and 1879. I should not have raised this matter, however, had it not been for the challenge of hon. Members. It was the conduct of Lord Salisbury in 1879 that more than anything else was the approximate cause of our presence in Egypt in 1882. Just let us ask ourselves what we have to gain? I do not believe we have anything to gain in Egypt as regards trade, because the Suez Canal is one of the great interests of the world which may be left to take care of itself. It is to the interest of the whole of Europe to keep this canal open, therefore, so far as the trade question goes, with all respect to the opinion of hon. Gentlemen opposite, I believe that British trade interests would be just as well cared for if there was not a British soldier on the Nile. I believe that the trade through the Canal would be as profitable to the country if we had nothing to do with Egypt whatever. As regards the military question, I do not presume to enter upon it, nor do I consider this House competent to judge of it. But we have had the opinion very strongly stated of a Member of the present Government, a naval officer of experience and ability, and he has told us that the Canal is no use to us at all. As far as I am able to form an opinion I should have thought that the Canal in case of war would be likely to be more dangerous than beneficial. Now, there are certain positive injuries which our position inflicts upon us. It embarrasses and embitters our relations with Foreign Powers, it creates or intensifies irritation in France, it makes it more difficult, as the Government have found, to their cost, to deal with France on all the other questions in every part of the world which turn up. We are told that Russia and Germany acquiesce in our being in Egypt. It does not necessarily follow that their acquiescence is due to any goodwill. It is better in these matters to be perfectly candid, and if there are Powers in Europe like Russia and Germany which desire to see us continue in Egypt, I believe it to be very largely because they can see our hands are full as long as we are in Egypt, and because they are powers which look with some satisfaction on the existence of a permanent cause of discontent and irritation between ourselves and the French Republic. There is very little disinterested goodwill and philanthropy in Europe at this moment, and I am sorry to say, if it be true that there are Powers in Europe which are glad to see us in Egypt, I do not think it is out of goodwill, but because they are glad to see us embarrassed, and because they wish to see diplomatic irritation fostered between us and other Powers. Now, what do these considerations bring us to? I agree that if we are to consider the interests of the Egyptian people, if we are to consider what would be called our philanthropical mission, it may be well that we should remain in Egypt some time longer, but I do not admit that that kind of philanthropy constitutes any duty. We have duties in other parts of the world, and we cannot attend to them all equally. There are some duties closer to us than the duty to the Egyptian people, and I believe we shall not discharge those other duties which our

Empire and Colonies impose upon us if we combine with them the duty of directing the interests of Egypt any longer. We are told we must stay in the country until we set up a good Government. I agree that a settled Government is a plant of slow growth; you cannot mature it in an Eastern country in a few years. If we had to stay in Egypt until a stable Government were established, it would certainly be a work of one or two generations. I believe we have a much shorter and simpler matter to consider than the forming of habits of self-government in the people of Egypt, and that is the question of leaving Egypt as soon as she can stand alone. It is not a question of creating self-government; it is not a question of completing our reforms; but it is merely a question of leaving Egypt in that state that when we leave the Throne of the Khedive will not immediately topple over. I hope and believe that that is not a very distant prospect; on the contrary, that with proper methods it is a very near prospect. I do not ask the Government to name the day or the month when they will quit Egypt, because I do not see that the naming of the day or the month would in reality bring us any nearer the goal. All I ask them to tell us is whether they assent to the very obvious measures which must be taken in view of evacuation, such measures as the reduction of financial charges and the creation of an adequate Egyptian Army. My hon. Friend the Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir George Campbell) spoke as if the question of the Egyptian Army was one of cost, and as if it were necessary for the Egyptian Army to be composed of 11,000 or 12,000 men. I do not believe that. I believe that an Egyptian Army smaller than 12,000 men may be sufficient—that is, an army of the proper quality. What is wanted is that it shall be a reliable army, and the best authorities assure us that it will be made more reliable by having an increase of black troops. High Military Authorities consider that the Egyptian Army might be greatly strengthened and improved in quality and discipline by drawing men from Nubia. Then, Sir, there is also the question of the reduction of the English Army. Our Government began the policy of reducing the English Army in Egypt, and I am glad to see that the present Government have followed it up and that the Army has been, and I hope and trust will continue to be, proportionately reduced. I believe we may reduce it till it consists of but one regiment. The Government admit that there is no longer any necessity to re-occupy Dongola. There was some talk about the re-occupation of Berber; but even Dongola is now out of the question. I believe that if we persevere we shall be able to reduce very largely the charge for the English Army of Occupation, while, at the same time, the Egyptian Army can be brought up to such a state that it may be fairly trusted to stand by itself when our troops are ultimately withdrawn. I think, also, that much good will be done by promoting and opening up trade. If there remain any danger from the Soudan at all, it would be best met by fostering or encouraging the trade which flows into it. If these measures are taken, and if, at the same time, negotiations are carried on with France for the purpose of endeavouring to amend the Capitulations, and for the purpose of reforming the civil establishments, for the neutralization of the Canal, and, if possible, to make an arrangement of a self-denying nature between the two countries for safeguarding the future of Egypt, I believe the day of evacuation may be very early indeed. But even supposing these things cannot come to pass; even supposing that the question of the Capitulations cannot be arranged as we desire, I believe our interests call upon us to quit Egypt very shortly. I believe that within two or three years at the outside we may succeed in withdrawing the last of our troops. I find it hard to express sufficiently strongly the sense which I entertain, the sense which I believe is universally entertained in this House, the sense which I think to-day's debate shows is very largely entertained on the other side of the House also, that the sooner we quit Egypt the better it will be. Even of those hon. Gentlemen opposite who have advocated the longer occupation of the country, I think there is scarcely one, except perhaps the hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Leicestershire (Mr. De Lisle), who does not say we ought not to occupy it unless we are able to do certain things which we know we cannot do. It is, I believe, the strong wish of this country that our occupation should cease. It has been admitted in principle by Her Majesty's Government's statements, and though they have said some unfortunate things in the course of the negotiations which have taken place, which might seem to point another way, I hope and trust that their deliberate and settled purpose is to reduce our army, and so to consolidate and improve the English Army that in the course of two or three years at the outside our responsibility will be at an end.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): I think it would be hardly respectful to the Committee if I delayed longer replying to the various speeches which have been made and to some of the remarks which have fallen from hon. Members of an extremely weighty character. At the same time, Sir, I must apologize to the House if I have to go over the ground which it has already been my duty to travel over on more than one or two occasions during the present year. It has been said by some speakers that this debate has become inevitable, in consequence of the limited opportunities which have been afforded for discussing this question; but I venture to think that if the debates which have taken place with regard to it were added together they would make one of very considerable length. Undoubtedly, the Committee has to consider new interpretations which are now put upon its position on former occasions in which Egypt has been referred to in the present Session; but I think I ought not to complain that the hon. Member for Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce) and other hon. Members have thought it necessary before the end of the Session to claim the attention of the House once more for this important subject. Of course, while some facts have been spoken about that are new, I must say for the hon. Gentleman the Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir George Campbell), who opened this debate, that his speech was something like the metrical version of the Psalms which he and other Scotchmen are familiar with—"Another version of the same." In season and out of season, my hon. Friend, ever since I have had the honour of a seat in this House, and I believe for many years before, has harped upon the same string. Still, out of respect to him, I must refer to a few things that he said. He has expressed a doubt as to the policy of Her Majesty's Government being in accord with their declarations. Well, I venture to assert that neither in my own humble person, who have spoken several times upon the subject, nor on the part of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, or of the Prime Minister himself, has there been the slightest divergence of declaration about the policy of the Government in Egypt. The hon. Member asks us whether we are taking any steps to withdraw? We are taking the only steps which, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government, would justify us in withdrawing—that is to say, we are introducing harmony and order into the administration of Egypt. We are lightening the burdens of the people as much as possible; and we are designing reforms, which we have placed in all their fulness before Parliament on the Reports of our Agents, and which, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government, are absolutely necessary to render the country really self-supporting and to relieve it of those burdens which have been unjustly laid upon it. These things have been declared again and again, and I cannot admit any—I defy anyone to prove that there has been any —inconsistency in the declarations of Her Majesty's Ministers upon these matters.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: I did not say there was any inconsistency of the Government; but that there was inconsistency between their declarations and their practices.

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: I hope that our practices have accorded with our declarations. At any rate, it will be my duty to show that they have. My hon. Friend has referred to the duty of gradually substituting Native for European administration, so that while we must inevitably direct and guide the Administration of Egypt while we remain there, we shall not omit to provide a substitute for that Administration by building up a reliable Native Administration. Other hon. Members have followed up that observation, and have insisted that, so far as our influence in Egypt goes, it should be directed towards, as far as possible, introducing a Native Administration in place of the European Administration. That is exactly what has been the desire of Her Majesty's Government to effect, and what, I am glad to say, is being carried out; and I wish to give proof to the Committee of that assertion. Within the last few months the Office of Postmaster General—a very important official in Egypt—became vacant, and in filling it up a Native was appointed in place of a European.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): Was he a Turk or an Egyptian?

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON: Well, when we come to speak of Natives in Egypt, of course, we mean the various Oriental races which are to be found there. I question very much whether we should find many competent administrators in that country unless they were Turks or Armenians.

Dr. CLARK: And Circassians.

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON: Still later the post of Harbour Master of Alexandria became vacant. Many authorities would have preferred that a European should have been appointed to that post; but here, again, we felt that our intention having been declared to substitute Native administrators for European administrators as soon as it was possible, a Native was appointed. I can assure the Committee that those appointments were made in discharge of the injunction of Her Majesty's Government, and in fulfilment of their promise to appoint Native administrators wherever it can be done consistently with the efficiency of the administration. That must be our aim, or we shall render ourselves worthy of the worst imputations which have been cast upon us to the effect that our declarations were all a mere sham. Something has been said by the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy, and other Members, about our neglecting to assemble a Native Parliament—and when I say our assembling a Native Parliament, I mean the Government of Egypt doing so, because it is not we who make these appointments, but that Government—and I think the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) talked about the Egyptian Government having set aside the Native Parliament altogether. Now, Sir, there never has been a Native Parliament in Egypt; I do not think there has ever been one anywhere in an Oriental country. I can say, for my own part, that had a Native Parliament, as we understand it, been set up in Egypt under Lord Dufferin's scheme of 1882 and 1883, it would have been utterly premature, and a great mistake. But, as I explained to the House on a former debate this year, there has been assembled a small House, I think it is called, of Notables, in which the districts are represented; and I told the House then that their deliberations had been very beneficial, and that they had shown an aptitude for administration, and that the Natives felt that their interests were represented in that Assembly. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Kirkcaldy also returned to the charge about the surplus, which he said was imaginary. Upon this point I can only repeat what I stated to the Committee the other day. I said that there had been no portion of the loans used to balance the Revenue and Expenditure in Egypt except to pay for the war expenses, and for that purpose it was expressly designed by the Convention of March, 1885, that a portion of the £9,000,000 loan should be so treated. I said that the surplus of the year 1885-6, which enabled the Egyptian Government to pay 5 per cent deducted from the interest on the Unified Bonds, was earned by increased revenue, and not procured out of the loans.

Mr. DILLON: Was the £450,000 of reduction on the Land Tax guaranteed in the Convention of 1885?

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON: I will come to that directly—I have not omitted to notice the reference of the hon. Member for East Mayo to that point. Perhaps before I come to that the hon. Member had better allow me to refer to the allegation of the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy that the excessive land assessment in Upper Egypt was continued, and no relief was obtained from the abolition of the *corvée* or reduction of taxation. That is a mistake. There has been a certain reduction of taxation out of that £450,000; I think it amounts to £70,000 a-year. I told the House repeatedly that there has been no large reduction of taxation pure and simple, because it was thought by the Egyptian Ministers that relief would best be given to the cultivators by the abolition or the large reduction of the *corvée* or forced labour for clearing canals. In all Egypt, speaking from memory—for I really cannot possibly, in the compass of time at my disposal, quote passages, although I am certain of the facts—in all Egypt about 56 per cent of the whole of the *corvée* labour has been got rid of; but in Upper Egypt the reduction has only been 23 per cent. But it must be remembered that in Upper Egypt the *corvée* labour is not so oppressive, because it is applied in the neighbourhood of the cultivators' own fields, so that they get the benefit of their labour, instead of being taken far from their fields, as used to be the case, and being compelled to give half the labour of the year to the clearing of the canals for the benefit of other people—their own land lying idle the while. Now, as to the £450,000 derived from the Land Tax, it was intended that £200,000 of it should be available for failures of payment. A considerable portion of that sum accordingly has been so applied—I think about £120,000—a certain sum in reduction of excessive assessments—and the remaining £250,000 was applied last year, and will be applied this year, in substituting a hired labour by contract for the *corvée;* and I am glad to say that an additional sum of £15,000 was provided last year out of the ordinary Revenue in addition to the £250,000. The hon. Member for Kirkcaldy referred to the new impost we have laid on the people—the smart money paid by people drawn for the Conscription who wished to escape military service. Well, in the first place, this as an exceptional tax for military service has always been the law and practice in Egypt, and if those who are drawn for the Conscription are allowed to evade service by payment, I do not think that the amount raised in that way can be called an addition to the burdens of the people. Let me say that those burdens will diminish considerably in amount on the reduction of the Egyptian Army. As the Egyptian Army has been reduced to 9,300 men—being a much smaller amount than it has ever stood at within our memory—undoubtedly the Conscription and payment for substitutes will be very much lighter. I will now for a moment remind the Committee that while this tax, which appears novel in the Revenue of Egypt, has been imposed for a particular purpose, that purpose being the relief of the people of Egypt, there has been some substantial progress made in extending taxation to foreigners, who have hitherto been exempted from it—a matter which I have already pointed to this year as being one of the greatest blots in the administration of Egypt. It has not been the fault of Her Majesty's Government or their Agents in Egypt that those taxes were not laid upon foreigners two years ago. There has been considerable difficulty in the matter; but still I am glad to say that the House Tax will be paid, and the arrears will be paid from 1886. There is also proposed a Stamp Tax and a Professional Tax, to which all foreign residents will contribute. Those taxes, when they come into full vigour, will undoubtedly give a considerable addition to the Revenues of Egypt, and will in time, I hope, enable the taxes levied on the Native population to be still further reduced. The hon. Member says that the White Book—rather than the Blue Book—laid before the House is very small. Well, the last one is not very voluminous; but the volumes describing the progress of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's Mission are very extensive. I have always thought that the way to enjoy anything is not to have quite enough of it, and certainly not to have too much. I think the hon. Member was in error in pointing to the last Blue Book amongst the Papers as comprising the fruits of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's mission. Let me remind him of Book No. 5, which is entirely devoted to Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's Reports on the state of Egypt, and the measures which in his judgment were necessary for the improvement of that country, and which appeared in evidence in the debate last February. That, I think, is likely to prove to the Committee that Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's Mission has been of real value to Egypt and to this country. I think his despatches have not been without flattering acknowledgment from hon. Members in the course of the last few days. I have already informed hon. Gentlemen and the Committee of the force of the Egyptian Army—that it consists of 9,300 soldiers of all ranks; and I am glad to say that only last week I had the pleasure of conversing with a distinguished officer of the Egyptian troops, who was lately in command of the advanced posts at Wady-Halfa, and who commanded in a successful action fought with the Dervishes last spring, the Egyptian Force being unassisted by British troops. This officer spoke with perfect confidence of the Egyptian Force as being able to defend the frontier. It was a mixed force of Egyptian troops and Black troops. For reasons which I will not enter into at this moment it is not desirable that the proportion of Black troops should be so large, but side by side with other troops they form a valuable force. What qualities the one description of troops lack, the other supplies. This officer told me that, in his opinion, it would not be necessary, so far as he could foresee, to send a single other British soldier up the Nile. That is something we ought to consider satisfactory, and to have accomplished in two short years. The hon. Gentleman asked why has the Egyptian Army been reduced, and we have to make arrangements based upon that reduction; whilst the hon. Member for Aberdeen says he believes that the army could be reduced to a single regiment.

Mr. BRYCE: The British Army in Egypt.

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON: The British Army was reduced because, in the opinion of the highest military authorities, it was safe to reduce it. It has not been reduced hurriedly, but step by step. When Her Majesty's Government came into Office in July, 1886, the British Force in Egypt consisted of 13,000 men; in May it consisted of that number; in August it was reduced to 11,100 men; and it has been successfully reduced since that time, as prudence has dictated, until it now stands at 4,500 men. That is a good deal, I say again, to have accomplished in that space of time. Besides this, the Egyptian Army, as the Committee knows, has been reduced to its present figure. We know what mistakes have been made in times past. I do not wish to re-open old sores by imputing blame to those who previously had the management of those affairs; but the Committee will remember what mistakes was made by reductions effected too precipitately; therefore it is now considered most important not to insist upon making reductions higher than the authorities in Egypt consider safe. I do not think that the Committee, with the figures which I have quoted before them, will think that the reduction has been too slow; the reductions will not stop there, if Egypt continues as it is going on now, and no more signs of external or internal danger and difficulties present themselves. I am hopeful that the Army of Occupation may be still further reduced next year, though I scarcely think that they will be effected to the extent suggested by the hon. Member (Mr. Bryce)—namely, so as to leave only one British regiment in Egypt. The total expenditure in Egypt for military purposes is £367,000, and how large a reduction this is upon the amount as it originally stood, the Committee will see when I state that in July, 1886, the expenditure on European troops was £467,000. The extra cost is now £170,000; and let me point out that the presence of those troops in Egypt does not involve a burden upon the British taxpayer in addition to his ordinary military expenditure, for those 4,500 troops, if they were not quartered in Egypt, would have to be quartered in the United Kingdom, and the extra expense caused by their being in Egypt is paid for by the Egyptian Treasury.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL: The right hon. Gentleman says that the total expenditure for military purposes is £367,000. Does he mean that that is the cost of the Native Army, or whether that includes the cost of the European troops?

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON: I think I am correct in stating that that is the total military expenditure in Egypt; that that sum includes the cost of the military occupation.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL: I would like to ask the hon. Baronet how it is possible for the British and Egyptian troops to be maintained at an average cost of £34 per man?

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON: Of course, I do not include in this pensions, which amount to a formidable item, and have been greatly swelled by the great losses in the Soudan. Well, Sir, an hon. Member asks why we did not come to some arrangement with France, and it seems to me rather unprofitable now to ask such a question. It is now an old story. The footing upon which we went into Egypt in 1885, was that a Convention had been entered into between Her Majesty's Government and the Porte in October, 1885 whereby there should be an inquiry into the condition of Egypt, and the cost of the administration, and whereby an ulterior Convention was to be formed. That has been the ground of our action or two years past; and is it not late in the day to ask why France was not consulted, and an agreement come to first, before we contracted that ulterior Convention? The policy pursued has been a continuous policy founded on the Convention of March, 1885, in London, and followed up by the Convention of Constantinople of October in the same year. But it is quite plain, from the extracts which have been read to the House to-day, that the French Ambassador in London was informed that if a period were to be named for the evacuation of Egypt by the British troops and officers, there must be a right of re-entry, otherwise we should run the risk of incurring the same difficulties and dangers again from which we have now hardly emerged. It was also plain that the French Government accepted that in principle, and that it was only at a much later period that the opposition of the French Ambassador at Constantinople began. Well, Sir, something has been said about the readiness——

Mr. DILLON: Will the right hon. Gentleman refer to the despatch in which it is pointed out that the French Government accepted the principle of our right of re-occupation, and in which it is shown that it was only later that the opposition of the French Government began?

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON: I apologize to the Committee for necessarily detaining it, but at the same time there must be a limit to the reading of extracts. If the hon. Member will refer to "Egypt, No. 8," page 5, he will find there, in a despatch from Sir Henry Drummond Wolff to the Marquess of Salisbury, from Serapia, received on June 8, 1887, these words—

> . . . Count Montebello proceeded to inform me of the points to which his Government objected. He said he had told the Grand Vizier that his Government did not object to the right of re-occupation, but to the manner in which the right was accorded. It gave England rights equal to those of Turkey, and this in perpetuity. In fact, by the Convention, England and Turkey were to be joint Sovereigns of Egypt."

Then if the hon. Gentleman will turn to "Egypt No. 7," page 3, he will find in a despatch from Lord Lyons to the Earl of Iddesleigh of 19th of November, 1886, that there was a difference of opinion between Her Majesty's Government and the Government of France. Lord Salisbury suggested that if disorders occurred it might be necessary to provide for a temporary return of the British troops.

> "M. De Freycinet held that such a necessity would be most unfortunate, but he would not absolutely object to its being contemplated. It was a question which he would be ready to consider in conjunction with the other Powers of Europe."

It had, moreover, been suggested that it would be desirable that certain reforms should be effected as a preparation for the departure of the British troops. M. De Freycinet was of opinion that these reforms should follow, and not precede, the evacuation. At first Her Majesty's Government could not agree in that view; they held that to leave the country in the hope that reforms would follow, with all the difficulties of securing the adhesion and concurrence of other Powers, whose views regarding the Debt and the Capitulations were often very different to ours, would be to postpone, perhaps indefinitely, the enactment of the reforms in Egypt which were considered essential to its improvement and good government, and to restore all the dangers from which we had escaped. There are many other extracts I might read, but I think I can employ the time of the Committee more profitably than by going into them. However, if the hon. Member were to look at page 25 of the same volume, he would see a very important passage in one of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's despatches relating to a conversation which he had with the French *Chargé d'Affaires* at Constantinople, in discussing the proposals of Her Majesty's Government, which, as I told the House last March, were not secret. In this passage these words occur—

> "M. Imbert said that the one thing by which France would really be satisfied would be by naming the date of evacuation. By this means the tension would disappear at once, and France could then cordially co-operate with us in the arrangements necessary for the future government of Egypt. In the proposal I had made, this date was not fixed, and a condition was inserted for re-occupation in case of disorder. This was in no respect leaving the country. His idea was that we should name the date of evacuation, that in the interval an arrangement should be made for the preservation of peace, and that within a limited period after our departure we should have the right of re-entry for the purpose of restoring order if disturbed"

Well, Sir, the result was that there is a difference of opinion as to the duration of the right of re-entry; and here, again, we come to the old story which the hon. Member for Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce) has re-opened in calling upon the House to say how long we are to remain in Egypt. He said he would not ask us to give days and hours——

MR. BRYCE: I said days or months.

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: But he said we should fix a limit, and having done so we should stick to it. Well, prophecy in the past I believe to have been very unfortunate in this Egyptian Question, and I, for one, have uniformly claimed that we should be relieved from the necessity of making pledges which, having once been made, have almost always led to disappointment. Let me tell the House that when I was in India an officer, who had returned to Bombay, told me that he was at Suakin when an announcement was made from this Table that Egypt would be evacuated in six months. He said that within his knowledge the result of that announcement was that the Cadi of the town had gone over to the enemy, declaring that he had a wife and family to look after, and that if we were going to leave in six months he could not leave them to have their throats cut. The evacuation will not be accelerated by pledges of that kind. On the contrary, by pledging ourselves to do our best to carry out reforms so far as our influence extends, we shall be far more likely to accelerate the time of our departure than by entering into any fresh prophecy on that subject. I must say that the speech of the hon. Member for Leith (Mr. Munro-Ferguson) was one which gave me great pleasure to hear, because it was a speech that was judicial in its character, and, on the whole, free from Party recrimination in its tone. The hon. Member is one of those persons who are willing, in this business, to attach no more blame to one Party than to another, and he merely wished to know what was to be done in the future. He asked one or two questions which I think are entitled to a reply. He said that the creditors of Egypt were entitled to very little consideration. Sir, may I say once for all, and impress it on the Committee, that for us to disregard the rights of the creditors of Egypt would in no degree enable the Egyptians to escape from their obligations to these creditors? Other nations are not willing that the creditors should be disregarded. We heard the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when we debated this point not long ago, say that he looked to the reduction of the burden of the Debt of Egypt as an object for which we should strive. In 1885 there was a happy omen—or, rather, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) pointed to it as such—that we were able to contract a loan for the rescue of Egypt from its financial difficulties by a Joint Guarantee of the six Great Powers of Europe. I think it would be a still happier omen if by some such means Egypt could be still further relieved. The burden is not much according to the nominal amount of capital and rate of interest; but I accept all that has been said by hon. Members as to the terrible burden it must be upon a country where nearly half its total income is taken away to pay foreign bondholders. It is not universally true to say that the payment of interest upon capital which has been imported into a country is a drain upon the resources of that country. It may be that a poor country borrowing in the cheapest market has got its money's worth in the expenditure of the capital on remunerative public works, and it would be an abuse of terms to say that it is an insufferable burden upon Egypt that she has to pay a certain number of millions sterling on capital which has been laid out in the country. But I am sorry to say that a great deal of the capital invested in Egypt has been absolutely wasted—as much as if it had been actually thrown into the sea. A certain amount has, no doubt, been spent upon works which are remunerative, and which are improving the country; but, no doubt, a considerable portion of the capital has gone in waste and plunder, and constitutes a substantial loss; and it is a grievous thing indeed that £5,000,000 sterling out of £9,500,000 which are raised by taxation in Egypt should be devoted to the payment of interest. What I said the other day I assert now, that the best way to alleviate the burdens of the people of Egypt is by rendering them more capable of discharging their liabilities. I did not say much the other night about what has been done in the way of irrigation, and the cultivation of Egypt depends upon irrigation just as does the cultivation of Upper Scinde.

When the irrigation works get into disrepair, and the vicissitudes of the seasons are experienced, the results are extremely unfortunate. But by the scheme which was referred to by hon. Members not long ago for the creation of a large reservoir in Upper Egypt, it is calculated that the cultivable area of the country will be increased by not less than 90 per cent. If that can be done, as engineers say it can be done without a very formidable expenditure, an immense water reserve will be created which will supplement the volume of the Nile in seasons when the river does not rise to its normal height. The hon. Member for Leith, and also the hon. Member for Aberdeen, both stated that the departure of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff has been unduly delayed. Well, Sir, it was delayed three weeks from the date when the Convention ought to have been ratified. It was delayed three weeks, and the reasons which were given some time ago were, of course, a figure of speech. When we say we are not at home, we do not always mean literally that we are not at home—it was an Oriental way of saying that the Sultan was not at home, and Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, as I think, adopted a wise and dignified course in remaining sufficiently long in Constantinople to enable the Sultan to ratify the Convention if he felt so disposed. The hon. Member for South Kensington (Sir Algernon Borthwick) said something which I ought not to miss giving a reply to. He said that, owing to the pressure put upon the cultivators, land had been expropriated for non-payment of taxes within the last few years. I can assure my hon. Friend that he has been entirely misinformed. I said shortly in the House the other night, referring to some figures, which I am glad to have with me now, that I had inquired as to how much land had been expropriated within the last three years for the non-payment of taxes. I find that in 1884, 62 taxpayers, with 855 acres of land, with a rental of £2,200, had their property expropriated; that in 1885, 122 taxpayers, owning 1,189 acres of the value of £4,359 were affected in this way; and in 1886, 369 taxpayers, holding 2,816 acres, of the value of £8,904, had their property expropriated. That is all the land which had been expropriated, so that my hon. Friend has been totally misinformed on that point.

Mr. DILLON: Has the right hon. Gentleman any figures as to the amount of land sold by the usurers?

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON: I cannot say what quantity of land was sold by the usurers, but I can say that the influence of the usurers has become infinitely less than it was before British influence was exercised in Egypt. The trade of the usurers is almost gone in consequence of the revenue being more honestly collected and more easily paid over. The wretched cultivators have not now to go to the local usurers for money, paying anything for it that he chooses to demand. No doubt the usurers know that they cannot get the assistance of the tax collectors in getting in their usurious interest.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL: Can the right hon. Gentleman say how much land has been sold by foreign creditors under judgments issued by foreign tribunals?

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON: That is another point altogether. I cannot say what land has been sold under the ordinary process of law in Egypt. I can only say what has been sold in connection with the land revenue which was the point in question.

Sir ALGERNON BORTHWICK: The forced sales have amounted to not less than £800,000.

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON: In reply to what has fallen from the hon. Member for Preston (Mr. Hanbury), and in reply to those who say that we are doing no good in Egypt, I wish to observe that no one can allege—and I do not think it would be right in us to say—that our stay in Egypt will be prolonged unless British interests are involved in our being in that country. Hon. Members have questioned—particularly, I think, the hon. Member for South Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce)—the military and naval advantages which accrue to us from the route through Egypt. Well, Sir, I would recall the recollection of the hon. Member to the circumstances under which we were called upon to quell the Indian Mutiny. I would ask him to remember the advantage it was to us to be able to communicate with India through Egypt, and to be able to send our troops with great expedition on occasions when a month earlier or later meant everything. Why, the French attach the greatest importance themselves to the Egyptian route for communication with their own Eastern possessions.

Mr. HANBURY: Were we holding Egypt during the Indian Mutiny?

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON: We had the right of passage which was given us by the Khedive, who was a friendly Power. I contend it is of the greatest importance to us to secure and preserve that route to India; but it is the object and desire of Her Majesty's Government that the Suez Canal should be a free highway to all the world. The question of the neutralization of the Canal is a mere question of terms. Her Majesty's Government are quite agreed that it is extremely desirable that the Canal should be free to all the world, and I hope that it will not take much longer now for us to bring about an international agreement by which this will be secured, and by which all difficulties will be removed from the settlement one way or the other of this important question. Reference has been made to the jealousies and rivalries of other Powers. The reason why such jealousies unfortunately exist, is because we are a great Power, because our possessions are very wide, and it cannot be helped if other nations desire to share in the commercial prosperity which our world wide possessions have brought us. I cannot think, however, that the existence of commercial rivalry should be allowed to degenerate into international animosities and enmities—we should never grudge a share of our expansion to other countries. Competition in trade may exist without its producing ill feeling; but I must say that nothing would be gained, we would not even gain the respect of foreign nations, by hauling down our flag and turning tail in Egypt. I think there is not much difference of opinion on either side of the House as to the difficulty of fixing a date for the evacuation; but I am here to declare that Her Majesty's Government are as little anxious as any hon. Member to prolong our stay in Egypt. We shall be as glad as anyone to leave it as soon as we can do it with safety to ourselves and with security to the Egyptian people for those benefits which we have gained for them by our presence there, and I think the history of the past few years shows how great the rate of progress has been owing to the presence of our influence in that country. I hope the Committee will consider that enough has been said on this point. The policy of Her Majesty's Government has been avowed, and in a few days financial papers will be laid upon the Table which it has not been possible to produce earlier, but which will fully illustrate the asertions I have with confidence made. Is it now too much to ask the Committee, as in this Vote for Diplomatic and Consular Services there is no more money asked for for Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's Mission, that this Vote should be passed at once?

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): I think we have now come to the parting of the ways on this Egyptian Question. I think this has been a very satisfactory debate in more than one way. I do not know whether we are clearing our minds of cant, but, at any rate, we are clearing our speeches of hypocritical phrases, and we are looking at this question from a free and open standpoint. There are two courses or policies to be adopted in Egypt, and we have heard both these policies supported by strong speeches on both sides of the House. We have one policy supported by the hon. Baronet who represents Worcestershire (Sir Richard Temple). He is in favour of remaining in Egypt as long as we remain in India. He does not say we ought to remain permanently, but he says he does not believe in retiring within at least 20 years—and when you have been 20 years there you may expect to remain longer. The speech of the hon Gentleman is a strong defence of our occupation. The first reason he gave in favour of our remaining in Egypt was that our duty would compel us to remain there. He did not define what our duty is, and therefore I hope that hon. Gentlemen who take the same side as the hon. Gentleman to-night will define it. He told us that practically our duty and our interest are the same —that it was our duty to attend to British interests, and that our true vocation was to go all over the world governing people who could not govern themselves. The hon. Member for South Kensington (Sir Algernon Borthwick) went still further, and told us that we must look at this matter from the standpoint of our interests, and must give up all pretence in the matter of philanthropy. The right hon. Gentleman opposite himself agreed, when taunted by the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere), that a great Parliamentary consideration for us was our own interests in Egypt; so that it comes to this—that we are there, and are remaining there, not for the benefit of the Egyptian people, but in our own interests. The hon. Member for Worcestershire protested against looking at this question from the standpoint of ancient history. Well, certainly, the history of this matter is very ancient—it is five years since we went to Egypt, and that is such a long time back that the hon. Baronet tells us that we must not go into the reasons which induced us originally to go there. I dare say not. It will not look well if we bring up the fact that we went there to suppress an attempt made to replace a despotic Government by a Constitutional one. Though we live in freedom ourselves, we went there to crush national feeling. That is ancient history, and we are now called upon to wipe it out. The hon. Baronet told us of all the advantages we have conferred on Egypt. His speech put me very much in mind of one of the chapters in his book, which describes what Indian officials are in the habit of doing for each other. They meet for the purpose of expressing their strong belief in the system which they are carrying out, and the great benefits which it bestows upon everyone, and then they congratulate themselves upon that happy result.

General Sir GEORGE BALFOUR: Is the result successful?

Dr. CLARK: I do not think it is. The great blessings and benefits we have conferred upon Egypt seem to me to be these—we have increased the body of foreign officials in that country from about one-twelfth to one-ninth of the total governing body of the country. The cost of the Government of Egypt is £4,500,000, and you pay about £500,000 to the foreign Pashas who are governing the country. What you have done is to replace the Turks and Circassians, who themselves were foreigners, by French and English Pashas, who are more expensive than the old Pashas formerly there. I look upon this question from two standpoints. You can either abandon Egypt, leaving it to its fate, or you can, on political or other grounds, remain there permanently. I listened with great amusement to the constant applause given to the arguments of the hon. Member for Worcestershire in favour of remaining in that country. The Solicitor General applauded his speech, so that not only in unofficial, but also in official circles of the Government Party, Members are in favour of our remaining in the position in which we are now placed in Egypt. Well, if you carry out the policy of letting Egypt and Morocco develop themselves in their own way, you would be free from all this responsibility; but if the policy recommended by the hon. Baronet is carried out, the result will be that you will break your solemn engagements, you will do a dishonourable thing, and will leave a blot upon your escutcheon. ["No, no!"] Well, we pledged ourselves, when we went to Egypt, that we would derive no advantage from going there. We went there to put down Arabi Pasha, and we said we would leave without taking advantage of our presence in the country. But now it seems we are to take advantage of it. It is said the Sick Man will soon die, and that we must be on the spot to succeed him. Well, if that policy is to be carried out, what is to prevent Russia and other countries following our example? If we are to annex Egypt, what is to prevent Russia following our example in Asia and in Europe, and what is to prevent France following our example in Syria and Asia Minor? I may frankly say that a great deal could be said in favour of such a policy as that being carried out. If we adopted a policy of that kind, no doubt we should be able to do a great deal of that which the right hon. Baronet says we all desire to do. We should be able to benefit, to a large extent, the Egyptian people. If you declare a Protectorate over Egypt, the Capitulations would cease, and English law—Colonial law—would exist, and a great deal of the trouble our presence was causing would disappear, and in that way, no doubt, temporary benefit would result to Egypt. But, at the same time, I think it would be exceedingly harmful to follow that course. I think, so far as Egypt is concerned, if we have done any good, the good we have effected is very little compared with what Egypt would herself have done if we had not gone there and crushed her national leaders. I am glad to see my hon. Friend the Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon), whom I first saw in prison some years ago, is going to do something for those national leaders. I think that Arabi Pasha, and the other national leaders of Egypt, are quite on a par with the Irish National Party. They are as much the representatives of their nation as Mr. Parnell, Mr. Dillon and others are representatives of the Irish. Seeing that we are going to crush the National League in Ireland, it is natural that these Irish Representatives should sympathize with the Egyptian national leaders. But, as the hon. Gentleman says, all this is ancient history—it is all ancient history that we went to Egypt to crush the national feelings of the Egyptians. The Egyptian people were refused the power they claimed—that is to say, the power of spending their own revenues. This country forbade it, and that is why we went to Egypt. The only thing satisfactory in the speech of the hon. Baronet was the statement that the Chamber had again met. The Chamber did a great deal of good at the beginning of Tewfik's reign, and if it is to be set to work again there is some hope for Egyptian affairs; but I am sorry the right hon. Gentleman has not given us any more definite statement. We have tied the limbs of the Egyptian people, and we tell them that we will allow them to walk whenever they are able to walk. But so long as you tie their limbs and prevent them from using them, how is it possible that they will ever be able to walk? So long as we remain in Egypt they will never be able to establish a satisfactory Government. As I say, there are only two courses open to us, either to leave Egypt or to enter into some definite understanding with the Powers of Europe on the question. Let those Powers absolve us from the Resolution which Lord Dufferin assented to, and let us arrange for a Protectorate over Egypt for 50 or 100 years to enable us to do something for the country. But this policy of drift, which we see disclosed in the despatches of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, has no other result than that of increasing the discontent of the Egyptian people.

GENERAL SIR GEORGE BALFOUR (Kincardine): There is one question which has risen up in the course of this debate on Egypt on which I think it my duty to make a few remarks. It is the question relating to the military force occupying Egypt. My hon. Friend the Member for South Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce) in his able and comprehensive speech, expressed a strong hope that the small force now in Egypt of 4,500 men from the English Army might soon be reduced to the strength of one battalion. I earnestly hope that no Government will be so insane as to lower the occupying force in Egypt below its present strength. I warmly advocate the withdrawal of the whole English force as early as possible; but I deprecate, in the strongest terms, the unwise attempt to hold that country by a battalion, exposing it and the honour of England to disgrace by the total insufficiency of the men to resist even a trifling insurrection. My hon. Friend the Member for the Evesham Division of Worcestershire (Sir Richard Temple) has in his high-minded speech urged upon us that it is the duty of England to occupy Egypt, and he repeated that word "duty" so frequently during his speech that I am bound to say, from personal knowledge and from observation of his distinguished career, that the word "duty" in his mind means a devotion to the public interest of the highest nature, and that his recommendation to us to retain possession of Egypt is a sincere desire to promote the welfare of the Kingdom. I am, however, fully satisfied that if the duty devolved upon him of finding the ways and means of men and money to carry out his own advice, he would think twice before he continued to put that advice in force. This view I take in connection with the military forces of the Kingdom. I believe at this moment that we have undertaken duties which require the aid of these forces to an extent far beyond their strength can provide for. I may enumerate these military requirements by stating that Ireland is now held by 40,000 troops and constabulary, and, so long as discontent exists in that country, not a single battalion—as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) lately said—can be withdrawn. In India we have now 70,000 English troops; and, having lately increased them by 10,000, we not only cannot reduce them, but may be expected to be called on to increase the numbers. Then for our

Colonies and garrisons abroad—even in time of peace—we require at least nearly 20,000 men; and, on the slightest alarm of war, we must largely increase that number. Then, as regards Egypt, it is true that we have reduced the force there to 4,500 men; but I do not believe there is any statesman or soldier who would affirm that this strength can safely be maintained, except under the supposition that peace and thorough contentment prevails amongst the population of Egypt. So long as good government exists, taxation is light, and oppression done away with, it is possible to risk the safety of that small force; but should discontent spring up and insurrectionary movements take place, or foreign interference be threatened, then it would be necessary to raise the Army in Egypt to 20,000 men. My hon. Friend will therefore see that if he had the duty of providing for our garrisons he would have to consider the forces available at his command. I have shown that 140,000 Regular troops are, even in peace time, needed for the occupation of countries which England's duties have constrained us to hold. This strength, deducted from our entire Army, leaves but a small number of effective troops at home, in England and Scotland. If additional duties are imposed upon the troops, additional strength must be made to the Army; and as voluntary enlistment is now carried to its utmost, resort must be made to conscription, which no statesman would dare to attempt.

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON: I desire to set myself right with the Committee as to the cost of the Egyptian Army. This year the cost is £E367,000, including the battalions at Suakin; in addition to which there is £171,000 for the European Army.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL: I do not wish to put the Committee to the trouble of a Division. I am content with having raised this debate, which, I think, has been a very useful one. The right hon. Gentleman opposite has twitted me with having repeated my views upon this question. Well, I admit it. I pointed out years ago the dangers and difficulties which we should incur in this business. If the Government would take my advice they would enter into terms with the French Government, and bring about a settlement as soon as possible.

The CHAIRMAN: Is it your leave that the Amendment be withdrawn? [*Cries of* "No, no!"]

Mr. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): I do not wish to detain the Committee for more than a moment or two; but I should like to draw attention to the very large salaries we are paying our Repesentatives in the countries outside Europe. Without offence to them, I wish to say——

The CHAIRMAN: Before the hon. Member can enter into that question, the Amendment before the Committee, which is a specific one, must be disposed of.

Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): Before we proceed to a Division—and I hope hon. Members who are present will take part in it and will not leave the House until it occurs—I wish to say a word or two. I really cannot help expressing my strong disapprobation of the answer which has been received from the right hon. Baronet, who appears to be in charge of this Vote. We have heard from time to time protracted debates on the Egyptian Question. Well, are we going to leave Egypt, or are we not? Though the right hon. Baronet has had an opportunity of giving an expression of opinion on this matter, he has not given an answer which will satisfy either this country or other European nations. I feel sure that when the country hears what he has had to say as the responsible spokesman of a responsible Government, it will share the dissatisfaction which hon. Members on this side of the House feel. We have heard to-day many strong speeches about Egypt, and I cannot help noticing the fact that hon. Gentlemen who spoke upon this subject, and notably hon. Gentlemen sitting on the opposite side of the House, gave us personal reminiscences of their own and observations of their own in regard to that country. I thought, Sir, that their observations might be very usefully set to that well-known tune, "I know what it is to be there." In this House we hear too much of these minor points. In the observations which are wasted on these minor points the major ones are often apt to be obscured—they are frequently obscured by the tendency of hon. Members opposite to deal with matters of little or no importance. Now, to-day, I could not help being struck with the manner and the speech of the hon. Baronet the Member for a Division of Worcestershire (Sir Richard Temple). He sailed into the combat just like a second Lord Nelson, with his colours nailed to the mast, and he told us that in Egypt England must do her duty. He told us —or rather he asked the question—whether we were for philanthropy or for the interests of the country; and he told us the results of his observations both locally and generally, and he told us that we were there neither for the one purpose nor for the other, but merely to do our duty. He told us it did not matter how we got there, but that, finding ourselves there, we could not shrink from the responsibility which we had incurred. That is all very well; but what are we doing whilst we are there? From all sides we have heard that the condition of the Egyptian people is not being improved; and who is paying for all we are attempting to do? Why, the taxpayers of this country are paying for it. That is the reason we are discussing this Vote—that there is a certain amount of money to be paid in connection with our stay in Egypt. Well, that being so, I maintain that if the English people, who pay for the maintenance of our troops in Egypt, and who pay this Vote at the present time, express a desire for information, they should be told how long they will be called upon to bear this burden. I really think that, dealing with the matter in a more practical light, the right hon. Baronet who has charge of this Vote should have given us some approximate account of our period of occupation. Well, he has not done that. It is not only the people of this country who have to be dealt with, but it is also foreign nations. I am not going to open up this vexed question now; but we have heard from the hon. Member for Mid Leicester (Mr. De Lisle), an hon. Member who evidently has been spending his holidays in Egypt, a great deal about the international arrangement between the various Empires of Europe. Well, Sir, so far as I can gather from the hon. Member's observations, our stay in Egypt is not only unjustifiable, but, worse than that, it is practically doing serious harm—and it is not satisfying the people who have to pay for our stay there. I did hope to have an opportunity of making a few remarks upon this question at an earlier period of the day; but at this late hour, and as the House is anxious to proceed to a Division, I would ask the right hon. Baronet how long this last plague of Egypt—the English occupation—is to last? Sir, we hear that in the days of yore one of the worst plagues that infested the land of Egypt was darkness; but that in the land of Goschen there was light. Well, let us hope that, as the Government possess a right hon. Gentleman of that name, they will, in another session, at any rate, attempt to throw some light on the Egyptian Question, banishing the difficulties which have hitherto perplexed this House. There is a great deal of talk about philanthropy in connection with this matter. Indeed, we can hardly meet anybody who takes up the Egyptian Question who will not tell us of the philanthropy of the English people in prolonging their stay in and their hold upon this unfortunate country. But what does this philanthropy amount to? Why, it simply amounts to pounds, shillings and pence. But we have been told, not by one Member, but by at least a dozen Members to-day, that our stay in Egypt has no connection with English interests; that though this country still holds Egypt, it is not for our own purposes, it is not for the sake of our commerce, it is not for the sake of our capitalists, but for the sake of the people of Egypt. Well, Sir, the people are not misled by these statements, for it is considered, and it will continue to be considered, as the hon. Member for Northampton has shown, that our stay in Egypt is connected with the fact that Egypt is considered the key of India.

It being a quarter of an hour before Six of the clock, the Chairman left the Chair to report Progress; Committee to sit again upon Monday next.

QUESTIONS.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—ARRANGEMENT OF PUBLIC BUSINESS.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, what Business would be taken on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, and what day he would appoint for Scotch Business?

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne) also asked whether the Mines Bill would be set down for Tuesday or Wednesday?

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.) said, he wished to know, whether the First Lord of the Treasury could particularize the day on which he would take the Secretary for Scotland Bill; and whether he could give them an assurance that it would not be taken at a very late hour, as there were some questions of importance to be discussed?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): There has been an understanding—I will not say an arrangement—that hon. Gentlemen representing Scotland should have a day to themselves on Wednesday. The Scottish Votes in Supply will be put down as the first Business, with Scottish Bills to follow. I have been assured by hon. Gentlemen that they will be able to get through the whole of the Business in which they are interested on Wednesday. Monday and Tuesday will be appropriated for Supply. The exigencies of Supply render it absolutely necessary that we should get some Votes. I am not in a position to say when the Coal Mines Bill will be taken; but I will take care that good Notice is given.

In reply to a Question by Mr. CONYBEARE, which was inaudible.

MR. W. H. SMITH said, the Mines Bill would not he killed by any act of the Government.

MR. MASON (Lanark, Mid) appealed to the right hon. Gentleman to allow the Scottish Bills to be taken first on Wednesday.

MR. W. H. SMITH: No; I cannot depart from the understanding that the Votes should be taken first, and the Bills afterwards.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL asked whether, if the Votes in Supply were taken first, the right hon. Gentleman would undertake that the Secretary for Scotland Bill should be taken next?

MR. W. H. SMITH said, he had, through the Lord Advocate, been in communication with the Scotch Members, and he would endeavour to make an arrangement which would meet the views of the greater number.

In reply to Mr. E. ROBERTSON and Mr. BRYCE, who asked whether, on the resumption of Supply on Monday, the debate on the Diplomatic Vote would be proceeded with?

MR. W. H. SMITH: No, Sir; that will be impossible. We regard it as perfectly hopeless to proceed on Monday with a Motion which has already been under debate for six hours.

DR. TANNER (Cork, Co. Mid) asked, whether the First Lord of the Treasury could state when the Appropriation Bill was likely to be introduced?

MR. W. H. SMITH: The hon. Gentleman is perfectly able to answer the Question for himself.

House adjourned at ten minutes before Six o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 22nd August, 1887.

MINUTES.]—SUPPLY—*considered in Committee*—CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES; CLASS III.—LAW AND JUSTICE, Votes 2 to 12, 14, 15.

PUBLIC BILLS—*Third Reading*—Post Office Savings Banks and Government Annuities * [344], and *passed* [*Changed to* "Savings Banks and Government Annuities."]

Withdrawn — Tithe Rent-Charge * [336]; Technical Instruction * [332]; Marriages Confirmation (Antwerp) * [326]; Intestates Estates * [187]; District Lunatic Asylums (Ireland) Officers' Superannuation * [375].

QUESTIONS.

ISLANDS OF THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC—THE NEW HEBRIDES—THE FRENCH COLONISTS.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, What action Her Majesty's Government has taken with regard to the French Colonists that have been sent out to the New Hebrides since the French troops have been in occupation?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): There is nothing in the Agreement between the British and French Governments providing that the subjects of neither Power shall settle in the New Hebrides.

ROYAL PARKS AND PLEASURE GARDENS—RABIES AMONG THE DEER IN WINDSOR PARK—DOGS.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether the newly issued Regulation, that all dogs taken into Windsor Park are to be muzzled or led, was issued with a view to protect the game, or in consequence of an epidemic amongst the deer; and, if the latter, how many deer have died, or been attacked, with rabies; and, under whose authority, and under what Act of Parliament, the Ranger, or Deputy Ranger, is empowered to prevent the free use of the Park and forest roads to the public and their dogs?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): Owing to the outbreak of rabies among the deer in Richmond Park, resulting in the loss of a large number, it was considered advisable to take steps to guard against any similar outbreak in Windsor Park, and with that view the notice referred to was issued by His Royal Highness the Ranger. No deer have died in Windsor Park of rabies; but it is known that at least 12 deer were worried and killed by dogs there before the notice referred to was issued. In surrendering Windsor Park, &c., Her Majesty retained the right of appointing a Ranger with the requisite staff. The Ranger is appointed by Her Majesty and the Deputy Ranger by the Ranger. They derive their powers by virtue of their appointments, and not under any Act of Parliament or from the Commissioners of Woods. The roads through the Park, like roads in other Royal Parks, are subject to Regulations as to user, which must, of course, be varied as occasion requires.

WAR OFFICE (ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT) — ENFIELD SMALL ARMS FACTORY.

MR. HANBURY (Preston) asked the Secretary of State for War, What arms are principally being manufactured at Enfield at the present time; and, what is the proportion of skilled artificers to unskilled hands employed in the manufacture of each kind of such arms?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): At the end of last week 519 skilled artificers and 579 unskilled workmen were employed in the manufacture of rifles; 287 skilled and 100 unskilled were making swords and bayonets; 70 skilled artificers and 53 unskilled workmen were occupied on machine guns; and 158 skilled artificers and 150 unskilled workmen were at work on various miscellaneous matters.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—FIRING FROM AN EXCURSION TRAIN AT COLERAINE.

MR. MACARTNEY (Antrim, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether, on the 27th June, a Roman Catholic excursion party from Toome and Randalstown went to Castlerock; whether while the excursion trains were passing through Coleraine Station several shots were fired from the side next the platform, where a large number of people were assembled; whether any attempt was made to make the members of the excursion party amenable; and, whether, in consequence of the repeated firing from trains resulting in serious bodily injury, the Government will institute a special inquiry into the circumstances attending the excursion of the Irish National Foresters?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: I am informed that when the excursion train on its return journey from Castlerock had nearly passed through Coleraine Station, at which it did not stop, about 10 or 12 shots were fired from it towards the end of the platform. One bullet struck a railway signboard. There was a large number of people on the platform at the time; but, fortunately, no person was injured. The occurrence was thereupon telegraphed to the police of Toome Bridge, which was the train's destination and first stopping place. The sergeant, with two constables, at once proceeded to the railway station and awaited the arrival of the train; but failed to make anyone amenable, nor were subsequent efforts more successful.

BRAZIL—EXACTIONS FROM A BRITISH FIRM.

MR. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether a sum of about £3,000 has been illegally exacted from the firm of Bowman's Heirs (of Dundee and Pernambuco), British merchants, by the Brazilian Customs, under the authority of a mere "aviso," or Circular of the Minister of Finance; whether, as regards £1,100 of this sum, the Circular was made retrospective, and applied to goods imported before its date, execution being levied on buildings belonging to the firm, and public advertisement of their sale being made, notwithstanding the firm's protest that the exaction was illegal; whether the Government of Brazil have admitted the illegality of the exaction, but have let five years pass without granting restitution; and, whether the Government are prepared to take any, and what, steps to obtain restitution of these moneys, and to prevent the recurrence of such illegal proceedings?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): So far as the Secretary of State is aware the facts as stated in the first and second paragraphs of the Question are substantially correct; and, if so, a great hardship and injustice has undoubtedly been inflicted on Bowman's Heirs. Her Majesty's Government are not aware that the Brazilian Government have admitted the illegality of the exaction. Her Majesty's Minister at Rio has been instructed, if on inquiry it should appear that Bowman's Heirs have exhausted all the legal means open to them to obtain redress, to ask the Brazilian Government for a settlement of their long-standing claim.

AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT—THE HESSIAN FLY,

MR. H. GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden) asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, In how many counties of England, Scotland, and Wales official information has been received of the appearance of the Hessian fly; whether its presence has also been reported in Ireland; what steps, if any, besides issuing warnings to Local Authorities, were taken, with a view of stamping out this agricultural pest in its commencement, by the Government when the Hessian fly's appearance was first reported last year; and, what steps are being taken to meet the now widely-spread danger to corn crops, and to check, if not too late, its further development?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY (Lord JOHN MANNERS) (Leicestershire, E.): Official information of the presence of the Hessian fly has been received from 19 counties in England, and seven in Scotland. No information has been received of its presence in Ireland or Wales. No steps were taken last year beyond issuing warning notices in August, September, and November, as already described, and it is difficult to see what other action could have been taken. During this year Circulars warning farmers of the danger, and giving practical methods of meeting it, have been widely circulated by means of the Local Authorities and the Press. The only other possible action would be to apply to Parliament for powers to compel farmers to plough in or burn stubble with or without seeds, and to burn infested straw, and to pay compensation for the losses so incurred; which action would probably be altogether inoperative, owing to the widespread nature of the attack, and the difficulty of detecting the presence of the insect. Practical farmers are opposed to such a course, and the Council of the Royal Agricultural Society, at their last meeting, were also against it. In Russia, Congresses were convened by the Government, composed of farmers and experts, who discussed the best mode of getting rid of the insect; but neither in Russia nor in America were any compulsory measures adopted. As before stated, a small Commission has been appointed here to inquire into the extent of the attack and the amount of loss caused by it, as far as possible; and when their Report is received it will be immediately laid before Parliament.

SCOTLAND—THE GREENOCK POLICE—ALLEGED ASSAULT ON A BOY.

MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.W.) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether he is aware that, as stated in *The Greenock Telegraph* of 11th instant, a police constable named Innes, at Prince's Pier, Greenock, on 21st July, struck a boy severely with a cane; whether a citizen named John McGiveran, on remonstrating with the policeman, was assailed by him in insulting and abusive language, assaulted, and placed under arrest; whether it has come to his knowledge that Captain Angus, Superintendent of Police, has refused to give the assaulted parties any redress, or to allow their cases to enter the Police Court, although their statements were substantiated by several respectable witnesses; and, whether he will institute an inquiry into the whole of the circumstances?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): The police constable in question did, while clearing away a number of boys from the gangway of a steamer, strike some of them with a cane. He did not do so severely; and the boy who was alleged to have been severely struck had no mark on him when examined on the same day by the Chief Constable. Some angry words passed between John McGiveran and the constable on McGiveran's interfering with him; and the constable arrested him and led him away about 100 yards, but did not take him further. The whole matter was reported by the Chief Constable to the burgh Procurator Fiscal, who did not consider that there was any ground for a criminal charge; and the Chief Constable thought it unnecessary to deal with the matter as one of police discipline any further, as the constable was leaving the force, at any rate, in a few days. I have seen the evidence taken, which is conflicting, and concur that a prosecution is not called for; but if any criminal charge is made, and further information tendered, it shall be fully considered.

ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY — REMOVAL OF THE POLICE STATION FROM CARRIGAHORIG, CO. TIPPERARY.

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether it is contemplated to remove the police station from Carrigahorig, County Tipperary, to Portland Bridge; whether, on a former occasion, after the Constabulary were removed from Carrigahorig, a man was fired at, and his life only saved by some coin in his pocket, which stopped the shot; whether "Boycotting" is still active in and around Carrigahorig, one large employer of labour having to send 14 miles before he can get his horses shod; and, whether, in view of the fact that Carrigahorig is an important station on the highway from Connaught to Munster, while Portland Bridge is entirely out of the way, he will favourably consider the Memorial, presented to His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant, against the removal of the police from Carrigahorig?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER FECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: Carrigahorig Police Station is to be discontinued, and a new station established instead at Portland. I have no information in regard to the case of firing at the person, beyond a statement by the person that his father was fired at in 1847. It is the case that Boycotting prevails through the Carrigahorig district; and one gentleman, who is a large employer of labour, has to get his horses shod at a place 11 miles distant. The Lord Lieutenant has given careful consideration to the Memorial alluded to. His Excellency has satisfied himself that Portland is a more important position for a police station than Carrigahorig, and that police duties at the latter place can be efficiently performed by the men at Lorrha, which is about 2¼ miles distant, and at the station to be formed at Portland, which will be three miles distant.

AFRICA (WEST)—THE ROYAL NIGER COMPANY.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, If, since the Papers regarding the Royal Niger Company are delayed, he can now state what territory is really in possession of that Company; about what population they rule over, and what revenue they have; what number of Europeans they employ in administrative appointments; how they are nominated and their fitness tested; who legislates for the territory; and whether any regular Laws and Courts have been established; and, generally, whether the Company is mainly a territorial power or a Trading Corporation?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): In reply to the Question of the hon. Member, at present I can only say that the Papers will be ready before long; and I think that any attempt to answer a Question ranging over so wide a field, and comprising so many details, might lead to misconception.

INDIA—THE NIZAM'S STATE RAILWAY.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether, since he had stated it to be known to the Secretary of State that, on the first occasion of a

Native Prince coming direct into the London Money Market to obtain money for the Nizam's State Railway, at least £138,000 was paid for promotion money, the Secretary of State proposes to take any steps to put a stop to such practices, either by providing that the money borrowed for public works and other purposes in Native States shall be borrowed through the Government of India, as was formerly the case, or by warning lenders that they must expect no assistance from the Government of India to realize debts which they have made at their own risk?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JOHN GORST) (Chatham): In the case of the Nizam's State Railway the negotiations were conducted between the Nizam's Government and the Company; and the then Secretary of State distinctly disclaimed all responsibility in the matter. In the event of any similar case again occurring, the Secretary of State must reserve his discretion to act as circumstances may require, and cannot lay down any general rules such as those suggested in the Question.

In reply to a subsequent Question by Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL,

SIR JOHN GORST said, that the Secretary of State reserved absolute discretion on his part to deal with any case that might arise according to the circumstances of the case. He was not disposed to enter into a pledge to the hon. Member or to the House that he would fetter himself by the imposition of a general rule.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: Does the Secretary of State propose to take any action or not?

SIR JOHN GORST said, that the Secretary of State did not propose to take any action with reference to the Company which purchased the Nizam's State Railway, and which was formed in 1883 under the auspices of the last Government but two.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—ROCHFORD (CO. WESTMEATH) PETTY SESSIONS — NON-ATTENDANCE OF MAGISTRATES.

MR. TUITE (Westmeath, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If two men named Keena and Costello were summoned to appear at the Rochford (County Westmeath) Petty Sessions, on the 15th July last, to answer the complaint of Mr. Rochfort Boyd, J.P., D.L., for injuring an eel weir, his property, and also to answer the complaint of the Kilbeggan Drainage Board for trespass; whether the defendants, with their solicitor, attended; but, as only one magistrate appeared, the cases were postponed until the 17th August; whether, on the 17th August, the defendants again attended, with counsel and solicitor; but, as no magistrate attended, the Petty Sessions clerk declared the Court adjourned; whether, on the latter occasion, even the prosecutor, Mr. Boyd, did not attend; whether the frequent non-attendance of magistrates at not only Rochford, but several other Petty Sessions in Westmeath, has been frequently complained of, and what action will the Government take to ensure the attendance of magistrates at Petty Sessions in the county; and, whether, having regard to the loss sustained by the defendants, Keena and Costello, in bringing counsel from Dublin, a distance of 54 miles, any compensation will be afforded them?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said, the clerk of Petty Sessions reported that Keena and Costello, the two men referred to, were summoned to appear at the Rochford Petty Sessions on the 20th July, and not the 15th. Two magistrates attended; but one of them being a Trustee for the drainage district he could not hear the case, and the other magistrate adjourned the cases so that he should have assistance. The defendants raised no objection to the adjournment. They appeared again on the 17th August; but no magistrate attended. Mr. Rochfort-Boyd was not present; but he was represented by his solicitor.

MR. TUITE said, the right hon. and gallant Gentleman had not answered the last paragraph of the Question.

COLONEL KING-HARMAN said, he did not see that there was any necessity for granting costs for bringing counsel from Dublin. There were excellent legal practitioners in the town.

MR. TUITE: May I ask the right hon. and gallant Gentleman, whether the celebrated Major Traill is in charge of the Mullingar district for a considerable time, and that he had only attended one Petty Session since he became *locum tenens ?*

Colonel KING-HARMAN said, he was not aware.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND) — THE POLICE AT KANTURK.

Mr. FLYNN (Cork, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If he has seen the reports in the Cork newspapers of 15th instant, of an occurrence which took place at Kanturk on the night of Saturday 13th instant, on which occasion Head Constable Horgan and a party of police endeavoured to enter forcibly the private grounds of the Rev. Father Collins, in spite of his protestations, and, on being prevented from entering by the gate, forcibly entered the premises by climbing over the boundary ditch; whether he has seen in said reports that the Head Constable and a police sergeant drew revolvers on the people assembled; and, whether, in view of all the circumstances, he will order an early inquiry into the conduct of the constables?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: It appears that on the night of the 13th instant the police at Kanturk followed a large crowd of persons which marched to the residence and grounds of the Rev. Mr. Collins, C.C., where it was understood a meeting was to be held. An altercation took place at the gate entrance between the police and Mr. Collins, who refused admission through the gate, but voluntarily gave the police permission to enter over the ditch, which they did. Upon the police entering the field the crowd assumed a very menacing attitude. Several of them were armed with pitchforks, and the officer drew his revolver and held it by his side.

Mr. FLYNN asked, what information had the local Constabulary that there was any intention of holding a meeting on the occasion in question; and, also, where the right hon. and gallant Gentleman had derived his information as to the people being armed with pitchforks?

Colonel KING-HARMAN said, with reference to the latter part of the Question, he derived his information from the officer who was in charge of the police. He had not received notice of the former part of the Question, of which he must ask Notice.

IRELAND—THE CUSTOMS WAREHOUSE, CORK.

Mr P. M'DONALD (Sligo, N.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether it is a fact that, in consequence of the wholesale traders of Cork declining to bond their goods in the Customs Warehouse owing to the lessee being a rival trader, the Crown is put to the expense of maintaining other warehouses while there is more than sufficient accommodation at the Custom House; and, whether complaints to this effect have been made from several quarters to the Board of Customs; and, if so, what resolution was come to on the question?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Jackson) (Leeds, N.) (who replied) said: Since 1882 there has been no increase in the number of the warehouses at Cork. Warehousing accommodation at Cork is in excess of the requirements; but the Board of Customs have not given any new bonds in consequence of the wholesale traders declining to bond with the lessee of the Crown Warehouse. It cannot, therefore, be said that the Crown has been put to expense in consequence of Mr. Foley's action as a trader. Complaints have reached the Customs as to the warehousing charges made by Mr. Foley; but the Board does not interfere with the tariffs adopted by the warehouse keepers. As opportunities offer, the warehousing accommodation at Cork will be reduced.

Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid) observed, that the hon. Gentleman said there had been no increase in the warehouse accommodation since 1882; but he (Dr. Tanner) was at the opening of a new warehouse in Nile Street in 1885.

Mr. P. M'DONALD asked if the complaint would receive consideration?

[No reply.]

WALES—THE MERIONETH POLICE—DISMISSAL OF POLICE CONSTABLE GRIFFITH.

Mr. T. E. ELLIS (Merionethshire) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been called to the dismissal of Police Constable Griffith from the

Merionethshire Police, and to the refusal of the Chief Constable to grant him any testimonial of character; whether one of the causes alleged for his dismissal is that he sympathized with the tithe movement; whether he has served in the police force for over four years with credit; and, whether he will make inquiries as to whether this policeman has received fair treatment?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): I have obtained a Report from the Chief Constable of the county, who informs me that this constable was not dismissed for sympathizing with the tithe movement, but for a gross neglect of duty. He had served in the police for a little over four years, and had borne a fair character. The Chief Constable has, by Statute, the power to dismiss him without notice. In this case he gave the constable a month's notice, and has not refused to give him a good general character, although he has declined to give him such a character as would enable him to enter another police force.

DUBLIN METROPOLITAN POLICE—CONSTABLE CURRY.

Mr. D. SULLIVAN (Westmeath, S.) (for Sir Thomas Esmonde) (Dublin Co., S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If Constable Curry, of the F Division of the Metropolitan Police, employed at Kingstown, had his costs paid out of the Imperial Exchequer in the case against him by Mary Anne Smyth, at the Quarter Sessions held at Kingstown by the Recorder on the 15th of April last; and, if so, by what authority; and, if any certificate was given to Constable Curry, exonerating him from any blame in the matter of his conduct towards Miss Smyth; and, if so, by whom?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: Constable Curry was paid out of public funds the costs incurred by him in defending the case against him by Mary Anne Smyth at Kingstown. The payment was sanctioned by the then Attorney General, on the grounds that the constable had acted reasonably and to the best of his judgment in the fair discharge of his duty as a police officer. A certificate exonerating him from any blame in the matter of his conduct towards Miss Smyth was given by the Hon. the Recorder of Dublin upon the hearing of the case.

DUBLIN METROPOLITAN POLICE—NUMBERS AND RELIGION OF RECRUITS.

Mr. D. SULLIVAN (Westmeath, S.) (for Sir Thomas Esmonde) (Dublin Co., S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, How many men have joined the Dublin Metropolitan Police during the last four years; and, how many are Catholics, and how many Protestants?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: Three hundred and twenty-one men have joined the Dublin Metropolitan Police during the four years ending July 31 last. Of these, 239 are Roman Catholics, and 82 are Protestants.

LUNATIC ASYLUMS (IRELAND)—CRIMINAL LUNATIC ASYLUM, DUNDRUM—THE MARRIED ATTENDANTS.

Mr. D. SULLIVAN (Westmeath, S.) (for Sir Thomas Esmonde) (Dublin Co., S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If all the married attendants in Dundrum Criminal Asylum are given lodging allowance; and, if not, why not?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said, six out of 10 married attendants were in receipt of lodging allowances. At the end of last year the Irish Executive had under consideration the question of extending their allowances to the other men; but the Treasury decided that as the Estimates were then being closed no decision could then be arrived at. The matter, however, had not been lost sight of.

BURMAH—THE BOMBAY-BURMAH TRADING CORPORATION.

Mr. CAREW (Kildare, N.) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether he is aware that King Theebaw had put and end to all leases of the Bombay-Burmah Trading Corporation, on the ground of unfair dealing on the part of the Corporation; and, whether the Government have made, or intend making, any inquiry into these charges before recognizing in any form their claims?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JOHN GORST) (Chatham): The circumstances under which King Theebaw cancelled the leases of the Bombay-Burmah Trading Corporation are perfectly well known to the Secretary of State; and I may remind the House that the injustice of the King in this matter was one of the causes which led to the conquest of Upper Burmah.

PIERS AND HARBOURS (IRELAND)—HOWTH HARBOUR.

MR. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether he will state or lay upon the Table a Return of the sources and amount of the revenue of Howth Harbour for each year since 1867; and, whether he will also state or lay upon the Table an Account of the expenditure of that revenue, distinguishing the different heads of expenditure, and specifying the exact nature of the works, if any, on which money has been spent in the period mentioned?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): An Account of the receipts and expenditure of Howth Harbour is being prepared, and I shall have no objection to the hon. Member seeing it when ready; but I do not think that it need be presented to the House.

PUBLIC OFFICES—THE NEW ADMIRALTY AND WAR OFFICE—GRANT TO MESSRS. LEEMING'S, THE ARCHITECTS.

MR. DILLWYN (Swansea, Town) asked the First Commissioner of Works, Whether he will cause the Correspondence between the Office of Works and Messrs. Leeming's, relative to the proposed new Admiralty Buildings, to be laid upon the Table of the House before the Supplementary Estimate for the grant of money to Messrs. Leeming's is brought before the House?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER (Mr. PLUNKET) (Dublin University), in reply, said, he must refer the hon. Member to the answer he had given some time ago to a somewhat similar Question by the right hon. Member for Central Bradford (Mr. Shaw Lefevre). He saw no reason for laying the Correspondence on the Table; but he would be very glad to show all the letters to the hon. Member if he wished.

INLAND REVENUE—THE INCOME TAX FROM ANNUITIES.

GENERAL SIR GEORGE BALFOUR (Kincardine) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, If he will state the amount of Income Tax derived from the capital of the several classes of Annuities mentioned by him, also the amount of Income Tax derived from the interest forming part of the several classes of the Annuities, showing the total from both sources?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): No distinction is observed between capital and interest in the assessment of Income Tax on Life and Terms of Years Annuities held by the public; as explained in the answer to the hon. Member's former Question, the Income Tax paid in respect of a portion of the Chancery Annuity only represents the tax upon the dividends of Stock standing in the names of the suitors.

GENERAL SIR GEORGE BALFOUR: I beg to say I am not satisfied with the answer.

WAR OFFICE—ROYAL HORSE ARTILLERY—GUNNER S. HOGBEN.

MR. D. SULLIVAN (Westmeath, S.) (for Sir THOMAS ESMONDE) (Dublin Co., S.) asked the Secretary of State for War, If Gunner S. Hogben, of I Battery, A Brigade, Royal Horse Artillery, stationed at Portobello Barracks, Dublin, who was lately decreed for the amount due by him to a local trader, has paid the amount of the decree; and, if not, whether the Government will either compel him to pay the amount due, or indemnify his creditors?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): I must decline, Sir, to enter into this case. By Section 144 of the Army Act the law deliberately exempts a soldier from the pressure for the payment of his debts which can be applied to a civilian. Tradesmen are well aware of this provision; and if, in the face of it, they allow soldiers credit they must do so at their own risk.

AFRICA — THE WEST AFRICAN SETTLEMENTS — ATTACKS BY SLAVE TRADERS.

SIR ROBERT FOWLER (London) asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether he has received from Sir Samuel Rowe, Governor of the West African Settlements, any complaints from the Chiefs of Jarra and Fogni of cruel and unprovoked attacks being made upon them by large bands of slave-trading marauders; whether these Chiefs have offered to place their territories under British control; and, whether Sir Samuel Rowe has made any Report on the subject, or advised Her Majesty's Government as to the best means of restoring order and protecting legitimate commerce in the Gambia?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir HENRY HOLLAND) (Hampstead): I have received from Sir Samuel Rowe complaints from the Chiefs of Jarra and Fogni of the kind indicated in the Question. These Chiefs have offered to place their territories under British protection. I received a few days ago a Report from Sir Samuel Rowe upon this subject. I can assure the hon. Baronet that Her Majesty's Government will give most careful consideration to that Report, and as to the means of restoring order and legitimate commerce in the Gambia. They are quite alive to the importance of the subject; but it is, as the hon. Baronet knows, beset with great difficulties.

TRINIDAD—THE JUDGES OF THE HIGH COURT.

MR. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale) asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether the Chief Justice of Trinidad happens to be, for the time, the only one of the three Judges of the High Court present in Trinidad; whether the Chief Justice gives daily audience, in his Chambers, to from 20 to 40 persons coming to him for advice in regard to grievances and difficulties upon which he may ultimately have to adjudicate in Court; whether a majority of the persons seeking audience are intending litigants; whether he is aware of dissatisfaction being manifested in Trinidad at this action of the Chief Justice; and, whether such action is customary, or has the approval of the Secretary of State?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir HENRY HOLLAND) (Hampstead): Yes; but I may add that it is now vacation time, and that there are at present only two Judges of the High Court, although the appointment of a third Judge has been decided upon, and will shortly be made. I am informed that some statements to this effect have appeared in a Trinidad newspaper; but I have no official information on the subject. I am not aware of such action on the part of the Chief Justice, or of dissatisfaction having been manifested; but I will cause inquiry to be made. Such action on the part of a Judge is not customary, and would not have the approval of the Secretary of State.

EGYPT—THE DEPOSITION OF THE EX-KHEDIVE ISMAIL.

DR. CLARK (Caithness) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether any official Correspondence exists which shows that the deposition of the Ex-Khedive Ismail emanated from a Continental Power; and, whether he will lay any Correspondence not already published upon the Table, in accordance with the usage that no Correspondence can be referred to by a Minister without laying the Papers upon the Table of the House?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): In my observations the other evening on the deposition of the Ex-Khedive Ismail, I was speaking from my recollection of what I thought was a historical fact. I did not quote from, nor had I read, any official Papers on the subject which have not been laid upon the Table of this House.

In further reply to Dr. CLARK,

MR. GOSCHEN said, it would be found, if the hon. Member would inquire, that the German Government took a very strong attitude and issued a very significant protest, as follows:—

> "That the Imperial Government looks upon the Decree of the 22nd of April, by which the Egyptian Government, at its own will, regulates the matters relating to the Debt, thereby abolishing existing and recognized rights, as an open and direct violation of the International engagements contracted at the institution of the judicial reform; that it must declare the Decree to be devoid of any legally binding effect in regard to the competency of the mixed Courts of Justice and the rights of the subjects of the Empire, and must hold the Viceroy responsible

for all consequences of his unlawful proceedings."

This communication was communicated to all the Powers. The Viceroy frequently broke his solemn engagements without any serious consequences; but the first occasion on which Germany protested against such a breach was soon followed by his deposition, though he would not say whether it was *post hoc* or *propter hoc.* It was Germany which took the action which culminated in the deposition of the Viceroy.

LAW AND JUSTICE (ENGLAND AND WALES)—THE SENTENCE ON MIRIAM JONES, FOR ATTEMPTED CHILD MURDER.

Mr. W. ABRAHAM (Glamorgan, Rhondda) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether he has received a Petition respecting the sentence of eight years' penal servitude passed at the late Glamorganshire Assizes upon Miriam Jones, barely 17 years old, for the attempted murder of her child; and, if so, whether he will recommend Her Majesty to mitigate the severity of such sentence?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): No Petition has yet been presented to me in this case. In the meantime, I am making injuiries.

SCOTLAND — THE EXPEDITION TO TIREE—POLICE CONSTABLE D. MACPHERSON.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether Police Constable D. Macpherson, of Tobermory, took part in the expedition to the Island of Tiree, of which Island the Duke of Argyll is landlord; whether this constable suffered in health from the exposure connected with the expedition; whether, in consequence of impaired health, this constable has been dismissed from the Police Force by the Police Committee; whether the Duke of Argyll is one of the *ex officio* members of the Police Committee; and, whether the Secretary for Scotland in any future expeditions will arrange that better accommodation is provided for the police?

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): The constable Macpherson did go to Tiree, but on his arrival was attacked with bronchitis, and was relieved from all but slight duty. He was subject to throat attacks when he joined the force, in which he has only served two years, during the last 10 months of which he did very little duty. I understand that, when formerly in the Glasgow Police, he was occasionally off duty from the same cause. He received full pay until his discharge, and a gratuity of £5 when discharged. None of the police who were in ordinary health suffered in any way from their stay in Tiree, and the arrangements made were all that could be done in the circumstances.

THE SALTERS' COMPANY—SALE OF THEIR IRISH ESTATES.

Mr. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.) (for Mr. T. M. Healy) (Longford, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Has his attention been drawn to the complaint that the Salters' Company of London, having sold for £250,000 their Irish estates in Derry, refuse to continue the grants which under their Charter they made to the various churches and endowments of the county; has the money yet been paid over to them; if not, will the Treasury refuse to sanction the transaction until some attempt is made to satisfy the conditions of the Charter; and, are any other London Companies in treaty with the Land Purchase Commissioners for the transfer of their property; and, if so, will any steps be taken to compel the allocation of some portion of the purchase moneys before the transfer is sanctioned to endowments and charities which these Companies under Charter have hitherto supported?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: My attention has only been called to the matter referred to in the Question by the Question itself. So far as I am aware, the grants mentioned are voluntary contributions. I have not seen the Charter of the Salters' Company; if it imposes any legal obligation to make grants to churches or endowments it should be enforced by legal proceedings. The Land Commissioners state that the purchase money in all completed sales on the Salters' Company's estate has been paid. The Treasury cannot refuse its sanction where the transaction between vendor and purchaser comes within the Act, and is approved of by the Land Commission. Other Companies are also carrying out sales through the Land Commission. The Government have no power to interfere so as to make voluntary donations compulsory. The matter is one for representation and action on the part of the charities affected, and not for Government interference.

MR. CHANCE: I wish to ask the right hon. and gallant Gentleman, whether he will take steps to discover if there if not a legal liability on the part of these Companies to continue the grants; and, if so, whether the Crown will take steps to have that legal liability enforced?

COLONEL KING-HARMAN said, he had failed to discover that there was any such liability on the part of the Companies.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): Would the right hon. and gallant Gentleman have any objection to arrange that the purchase money shall be withheld until Parliament has ascertained whether the original grants impose the spending of a certain amount of money?

COLONEL KING-HARMAN said, the Government had no power to act in the manner suggested by the hon. Member.

LABOURERS (IRELAND) ACTS—THE MILLSTREET UNION.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If it is correct that 133 cottages have been applied for by the Millstreet Union, under the Labourers Acts, Ireland, and that 108 have been authorized by the Local Government Board, and that as yet there are neither any cottages erected or in course of construction; what is the cause of the delay; is it a fact that £56 6*s.* has been expended in Medical Reports upon these prospected cottages, while £42 5*s.* 6*d.* has only been spent in the Macroom Union, where 420 cottages are applied for, and 315 sanctioned by the Local Government Board; Why the disparity in this item; and, why has the Local Government Board paid £39 7*s.* in the Millstreet Union, and only £43 17*s.* 6*d.* in the Macroom Union, for the above-mentioned unequal results?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The figures given in this Question are correct. The delay in erecting cottages in the Millstreet Union appears to have arisen from an informality in the notices furnished by the Guardians on the owners and occupiers of the lands to be compulsorily taken. The Clerk of the Union reports that the 108 cottages are now in course of erection. The disparity in the medical expenses arises from the fact that the medical officers of Millstreet Union were paid by the Guardians at the rate of 7*s.* 6*d.* for each cottage, while in Macroom Union the remuneration was at the rate of 2*s.* 6*d.* a house. The comparatively slight difference between the law costs in the two cases, having regard to the number of cottages, is due to the fact that in the Macroom Union there were only two schemes to be dealt with; whereas in the Millstreet case there were 11 such schemes.

METROPOLITAN PRISONS—CLERKENWELL AND COLDBATH FIELDS — SALE OF SITES.

MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether a portion of the site of Coldbath Fields Prison has been sold to the Post Office; and, if so, what is the area of the land sold, and the price obtained; whether the site of the Clerkenwell House of Detention, and a portion of the site of Coldbath Fields Prison, have been sold to the London School Board; and, if so, what is the area of the land sold, and the price obtained; and, if not, whether negotiations are in progress; what portion of the sites of the two Prisons still remains undisposed of, and to what purpose it is proposed to apply it; and, whether, having regard to the requirements of the crowded neighbourhoods of the Prisons, he can state why the aggregate area of the sites have not been utilized for the erection of dwellings for the labouring classes, and for the creation of open spaces?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): The Treasury have arranged that the Post Office shall have at least five acres of the Coldbath Fields site. The Post Office being a Government Department no question of price arises. No portion of the Coldbath Fields site has been sold to the London School Board. The Clerkenwell site has not yet been sold to the London School Board; but negotiations are in progress. There are about four acres of the Coldbath Fields undisposed of, some portion of which may be wanted by the London School Board. Endeavours have been made, by negotiation with the Metropolitan Board of Works and private persons, to utilize the sites for the erection of low-rented artizans' dwellings, but without success. The appropriation of part of the site to the Post Office was for the purpose of satisfying a public want. The sale to the School Board, if it is carried out, will avoid the removal of existing artizans' dwellings and the eviction of the occupiers, which would take place if the School Board purchased another site in Clerkenwell. I may add that the Clerkenwell Vestry were of opinion that additional artizans' dwellings were unnecessary in this locality.

THE TITHE COMMISSION—WELSH-SPEAKING WITNESSES.

Mr. T. E. ELLIS (Merionethshire) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been called to the fact that with the exception of the officers of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, the two Chief Constables, and the Church of England clergymen, the great majority of the persons who appeared before the Tithe Commission gave their evidence in the Welsh language; and whether, in view of the great interest taken in the Report of the Commissioner by the Welsh people, he will direct Professor Rhys, Secretary to the Commissioner, to prepare a Welsh translation of the Report?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): I am not aware how many of the witnesses before the Tithe Commission gave their evidence in Welsh. I do not propose to have an official translation of the Report into Welsh made by Professor Rhys. I have no doubt that private effort will supply any demand there may be for a Welsh translation.

Sir EDWARD J. REED (Cardiff) appealed to the Home Secretary to reconsider the matter. There were a large number of persons who are awaiting the Report with extreme interest, and many of them would be unable to read it unless it were produced in Welsh. No voluntary translation would be read with the same confidence as would one that was known to be authorized.

Mr. MATTHEWS said, he would willingly consider the matter further. It would be felt that it was not easy for the Government to undertake to translate an official document into Welsh or Gaelic; and he should have thought that private efforts would have abundantly satisfied any demand for a translation. He was sorry to hear that there were so many people in Wales who did not read English.

STATE OF IRELAND—"BOYCOTTING AND POLICE PROTECTION (IRELAND)."

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, with reference to the Parliamentary Paper, "Boycotting and Police Protection (Ireland)," circulated on Saturday last, What state of facts is alleged by the Irish Government in regard to the cases of "Persons wholly Boycotted" and "Persons partly Boycotted," respectively; under what circumstances persons enumerated in the Return receive "special constant police protection;" how their cases are distinguished from those of persons "protected by patrols;" and, what is the operation of this latter form of protection; and, whether the Return is founded upon Reports and representations by the police?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: Persons are described as "wholly Boycotted" when no one in their neighbourhood will work for them, supply them with goods, or have any intercourse with them; as "partially Boycotted" when, although put to serious inconvenience, they are not altogether unable to buy necessaries, or to exchange the civilities of life with their neighbours. Persons described as receiving "special constant police protection" are those whose lives are in such danger that they have to be protected by the presence of the police at all times. Persons "protected by patrols" are those whose lives are not considered to be in danger, but whose person or property is liable to outrage. The form the latter takes is the presence of the police at different times throughout the 24 hours at the place where the protection is needed. The Return is founded upon Reports made by the local Constabulary Authorities.

MR. SEXTON: I would like to ask the right hon. and gallant Gentleman, if the 768 persons mentioned in the first Return as being wholly or partly Boycotted are included in the 1,000 persons mentioned in the second Return as having casual police protection?

COLONEL KING-HARMAN: I must ask the hon. Gentleman to put the Question down.

MR. SEXTON: Surely the right hon. and gallant Gentleman can tell the House. The first Return says 169 persons are wholly Boycotted and 609 partly; and I want him to say if they are the same persons who receive special or casual protection in the second Return?

COLONEL KING-HARMAN: I have not got the Return before me; but if the hon. Gentleman will put the Question down I will ascertain.

MR. SEXTON: I will repeat the Question to-morrow.

CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDURE (IRELAND) ACT, 1887 — SECTION 6—PROCLAMATION OF THE NATIONAL LEAGUE.

MR. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether, having regard to the provisions of the Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act (section 6, sub-section 3), he will lay before the House the evidence which has satisfied the Lord Lieutenant that the National League—

> "Promotes and incites to acts of violence and intimidation, and interferes with the administration of the law,"

or such information as will enable the House to decide, in terms of the Statute, whether the Proclamation should continue in force or not?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The complete evidence cannot be laid before the House in the form of a Return; but information bearing on the subject can be obtained from the Returns relating to Boycotting and to agrarian crime which are already in possession of the House.

BOARD OF CUSTOMS—"EXTRA MESSENGERS."

MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether there are certain officials, styled "extra messengers," employed by the Board of Customs at a remuneration of 3*s.* per diem when on duty; whether these officers receive an additional 6*d.* per diem after five years of continuous service; whether their pay is deducted when they are not on duty from any cause whatsoever; whether some of these officers, with service ranging from 10 to 29 years, sent a Memorial to the Board of Customs on the 6th June asking that their pay might not be deducted for the holiday which they would be compelled to take on the occasion of the Queen's Jubilee Celebration; whether their pay was actually deducted on account of the public holiday on that occasion; whether another Petition, asking for a reply to the former Memorial, was sent to the Board of Customs on the 11th August; whether a reply will be sent to either of these Memorials; and whether, in future, the extra messengers of Customs will receive pay for the Queen's Birthday, Christmas Day, Good Friday, and the four Bank Holidays?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): The extra messengers referred to are "glutmen," usually called extra men, and they are paid 3*s.* a-day when employed. An additional 6*d.* a-day is not now paid except in the cases of certain men who were originally so employed under conditions which do not now apply to extra men in general. Glutmen are only paid when employed. The extra men in London sent into the Board of Customs on the 6th of June last a Memorial requesting that they might be granted their usual pay as if they were on duty for Tuesday, the 21st of June—which was observed as a Bank Holiday on the occasion of Her Majesty's Jubilee Celebration—although not employed on that day. As these men were not employed on this public holiday, they were, in accordance with the terms of their engagement, not paid for that day, and the Treasury has refused to alter that decision. A second Memorial was sent in to the Board of Customs on the 11th of August asking for a reply, which I will ask the Commissioners to send. With regard to the last Question, I have only to say that these extra men will be paid, as at present, for the days on which they are employed.

LAW AND POLICE—ARREST OF A FRENCH LADY (MDLLE. DROUIN) AT COWES.

Mr. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether he is now in a position, having ascertained the facts relating to the recent arrest of Mdlle. Drouin, in the Isle of Wight, to state what apology or compensation he proposes to make to her for the grave inconvenience and annoyance she has suffered?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): I have suggested to the Chief Constable in Hants, who effected the arrest, that he should offer Mdlle. Drouin a full apology; and I will consider, with the Treasury, whether the circumstances require that she should be offered an additional *solatium* in consideration of the inconvenience and annoyance she has suffered. The hon. Member is aware that this matter gives rise to an international question. Mdlle. Drouin has been ascertained to be a lady of perfect respectability and unimpeachable character, and I greatly regret the annoyance to which she has been subjected. At the same time, the hon. Member will understand that the Hampshire police had no alternative upon the information given them than to take Mdlle. Drouin before the magistrate.

PRISONS (IRELAND) — SALARIES TO THE CHAPLAINS AND SURGEONS.

Mr. JUSTIN M'CARTHY (Londonderry City) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether the Government intend to take any steps to carry out the recommendation of the Irish Executive with reference to an increase of salaries to the chaplains and surgeons of Irish prisons?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): I must refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer given on a previous occasion to a similar Question on the 26th of July, which was to the effect that a final decision could not be come to before the Estimates were prepared.

POST OFFICE (IRELAND) — TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT—THE TELEGRAM OF CAPTAIN PLUNKETT.

Mr. HOOPER (Cork, S.E.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether from any Department or agent of the Government an offer has been made of a reward of £50, or any other sum, for information as to the divulging to a Cork newspaper of the telegram of Captain Plunkett, of the 9th March last, to the Inspector of Constabulary at Youghal; and, if so, is the offer still in existence, or has it been withdrawn?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): Similar Questions have already been answered in this House, and I can only repeat that I have no information of the offer of any such reward.

Mr. HOOPER: With all the sources of Government information at his command, will the right hon. Gentleman undertake to deny that such a reward was offered?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: I have no information on the matter.

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS — THE NORTH HUNTS ELECTION—THE PARISH CONSTABLE OF EARITH.

Mr. P. STANHOPE (Wednesbury): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department a Question of which I have given him private Notice—namely, Whether at a Liberal meeting at Earith, in North Hunts, the Liberal candidate was brutally interrupted by the parish constable, who loudly announced his intention of preventing the candidate from being heard, and who effected his object by the persistent use of an enormous rattle throughout the whole duration of his speech? I wish to know whether this suppression of the right of free speech by a public functionary meets with the approval of the Home Secretary; and, whether it is merely a development of the recently announced policy of the Government with respect to the political organizations of their opponents; or whether he will give immediate instructions to prevent this apparently gross abuse of his official position by a parish constable?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): I know nothing of the facts stated in the Question, which has only just been put into my hands. The parish constable of Earith is not in any way dependent upon Her Majesty's Government, nor does he receive any orders from Her Majesty's Government.

CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDURE (IRELAND) ACT, 1887—PROCLAMATION OF THE NATIONAL LEAGUE.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether there is any foundation for the report in the newspapers that the debate on the Proclamation of the National League will take place on Monday next instead of Thursday next?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): No, Sir.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I wish to ask the Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland, whether the Dublin police acted yesterday on instructions from the Government in tearing down placards announcing a public meeting convened by the Lord Mayor of Dublin to express an opinion on the Proclamation of the National League by the Government; and, if so, what were the grounds for the instructions?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet): The Irish Office has as yet received no information of the tearing down of any placards.

MR. SEXTON: I will ask the Question to-morrow.

ULSTER CANAL AND TYRONE NAVIGATION BILL.

MR. MACARTNEY (Antrim, S.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether, in view of the interest taken in Belfast and the North of Ireland generally in the Ulster Canal and Tyrone Navigation Bill, facilities would be given for the passing of the Bill?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster) said, he hoped that the Bill would be passed in the course of the Session.

COAL MINES, &c. REGULATION BILL.

In reply to Mr. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck),

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster) said, this Bill would not be proceeded with to-night. He had undertaken to give Notice when the Bill would be taken, and when taken it would be at an early hour in the evening. The Bill would be reprinted.

CRIMINAL LAW—THE SOUTHAMPTON MURDERER.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the postponement for a week of the execution of the man Early at Winchester for the murder of his sweetheart at Southampton, Whether this postponement was in consequence of a member of the Royal Family having announced her intention of coming to Winchester in order to unveil a statue of Her Majesty?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): The sentence of death on the convict Early has been commuted to penal servitude for life.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY—CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES.

SUPPLY—*considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

CLASS III.—LAW AND JUSTICE.

(1.) £88,354, to complete the sum for Criminal Prosecutions, Sheriffs' Expenses, &c.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I should like to ask the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury, who is in charge of this Vote, for some information in respect of compensations for which there is a sum of £800 included in the Estimate. I want to know whether these compensations have any bearing on the question of superannuation allowances?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): No; they are compensations for abolition of office brought about by certain Acts of Parliament.

MR. CONYBEARE: The Committee are clearly to understand that they are not asked in this Vote for anything that ought to come under the head of superannuation allowance.

MR. JACKSON: Certainly. This item has no connection whatever with superannuation allowances.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): I want to ask how it comes to pass that the extradition expenses are always the same figure, and that there is never any decrease in them? They are £400 this year, and they were £400 last year. Is that to be the necessary sequence in all times and under all circumstances?

Mr. JACKSON: It is true that the sum in the Estimates this year is the same as that taken last year; but it does not follow that the expenditure was the same in the two years. Estimates of this kind must be more or less a matter of guess. In 1883-4 the Estimate was £480, and the amount expended £551. In 1884-5 the Estimate was £600, and the expenditure £227. In 1885-6 the Estimate was £600 and the expenditure £201. The Estimate, therefore, has been reduced from £600 in 1884-5 to the amount now asked for—namely, £400, and any part of the sum which is not expended will be returned to the Exchequer.

Dr. TANNER: I put it to the common sense of hon. Members why, if the expenditure is greater or less than the sum actually put down in the Estimates, a statement to that effect should not appear on the Paper? In relation to the national expenditure, when the amount spent has been a good deal less than the Estimate, we ought to rely upon a proportionate reduction being made in the Estimates for the following year. It appears that although three or four years ago the expenditure was greater than the sum actually put down on the Paper it has been a diminishing expenditure ever since. I would appeal to the hon. Gentleman to endeavour, as far as possible, to avoid any appearance of having the accounts cooked in this sort of way. I think that they ought always to be put before Parliament in a reasonable and straightforward manner, and it is only right that the Committee should know what the actual expenditure has been.

Mr. JACKSON: It is impossible accurately to forecast the expenditure under such an item as this. What I said was that the expenditure two years ago was only £200, although the amount taken in the Estimate was £600, and with a view of bringing the grant nearer to the actual expenditure the sum has this year been reduced to the sum of £400.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): As I see the hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General in his place, I wish to put a question to him in reference to an item in this Vote in regard to the position of clerks to the magistrates in rural districts. I see an item in the Vote of £135,000 in connection with the administration of justice; and I wish to ask him whether he has yet taken any steps to prevent the scandal which now obtains, owing to the fact that the clerks find their duties in conflict with their interests in the matter of the committal of prisoners?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir Richard Webster) (Isle of Wight): The hon. Member has gone somewhat too far in describing this state of affairs as a "scandal." I have had my attention called to the fact, and I agree that it is undesirable that persons in the position the hon. Member refers to should make a profit out of the prosecution of prisoners. But the hon. Member is probably aware that these matters are controlled by Statute, and that a Bill would have to be introduced to deal with the matter. Of course, it is not possible to introduce a measure of that kind this Session; but I will undertake that the matter shall not be lost sight of.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: If the present Government remain in Office next Session, will the hon. and learned Gentleman introduce such a Bill?

Sir RICHARD WEBSTER: I certainly hope that something may be done in the matter. If the matter rests with me next Session, I shall certainly advise the Government to take some action in regard to it.

Mr. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee): This item of £135,000 in connection with the administration of justice is by far the larger portion of the Vote. I find that a small portion of the Vote is accounted for under separate heads and items; but there are no items which account for this enormous expenditure of £135,000. I will, therefore, ask the Secretary to the Treasury where we are to find the items accounted for?

Mr. JACKSON: These sums are repayments to Local Authorities of the cost of criminal prosecutions. The scale of allowances is fixed by the Secretary of State, under the authority of an Act of Parliament. It is impossible to say beforehand what the actual amount will be, as it depends upon the amount of crime.

Vote *agreed to.*

(2.) Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum, not exceeding £250,738, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1888, for such of the Salaries and Expenses of the Supreme Court of Judicature as are not charged on the Consolidated Fund."

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: Hon. Members will be aware that a Committee was appointed by Lord Selborne to inquire into the re-organization of the central office and the remuneration of the officers there. That Committee has rendered very useful service, and has presented a very strong Report. I do not propose to quote extensively from the Report; but I will mention only those points on which the Committee were unanimous. They were, first of all, that a thorough re-organization of the central office is required; secondly, that structural changes in the Royal Courts of Justice, which do not appear to present any difficulty, are required for this purpose; thirdly, that the number of Masters—now 18—as provided by the Act of 1879 is excessive; fourthly, that certain duties now performed by the Masters may be performed by other officers; fifthly, that the number of clerks of the higher grade may, on re-organization, be materially reduced; and, sixthly, that all the officers shall be in attendance throughout the office hours, and that some effective supervision shall be devised in order to secure their attendance. Those are the points on which the Committee were absolutely unanimous. They are all important points, and the recommendations of the Committee were very strong. We are all agreed upon the subject of this Vote, and if these proposals had been carried out the Vote would not be what it now is, but might be very materially reduced. The Report was presented in June last year. The Estimates now before the House were not prepared for several months after that, and the Government had plenty of time to make further arrangements, the Report of the Committee having gone into matters of such detail that there would have been no difficulty whatever in carrying out a large portion of their recommendations. I have looked through the Votes in vain for any trace of anything like a real and effective attempt, on the part of the Treasury, to carry out the recommendations I have mentioned. I cannot see that either in the Vote itself, taken as a whole, or in any part of it, that there is anything like the re-organization which, after such a Report as this, we might reasonably have expected. I hope the Secretary to the Treasury will be able to tell us that some changes are in contemplation, and actually in hand, which may lead to a very material reduction in the Vote in the near future. I think we are bound to assume that, after the interval which has now taken place, there should be some effort to carry out the important recommendations of so authoritative a Committee, and I shall be glad to hear that not only have the Treasury taken the matter in hand, but that steps are being actually taken in regard to it.

MR. PICTON (Leicester): There is another point in connection with this Vote to which I wish to call the attention of the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury before the Vote is passed. It is a subject upon which I think a little explanation ought to be given. On page 211 there is an item for the office of the Commissioners of Lunacy, and it will be seen that there is a first-class clerk, but no secretary. It would never be imagined, from the mode in which the item is entered in the Votes, that the duties of first-class clerk are being discharged by a gentleman who has been also discharging the responsible duties of secretary for about 11 years past. At that time there was an Act passed, I believe, mainly through the influence of Lord Cairns, which remodelled the office and suppressed the secretary. It would seem at first sight rather singular that the secretary should have been a mere supernumerary holding a sinecure office; but I believe that I can fully account for what may seem to be a paradox. I believe it was thought that the work was not satisfactorily carried on, and as a temporary arrangement the duties of secretary were transferred to a gentleman who is entered here as a first-class clerk, and from that day to this he has been discharging the duties of secretary. Those duties involve a very considerable amount of responsibility. There are many delicate functions to discharge in connection with the patients and their relatives, and a large amount of business of a responsible character is necessarily thrown upon this gentleman, because the Visitors are continually on circuit and occupied with other duties. This first-class clerk has to keep up a daily correspondence with the Visitors while they are on circuit. He has also to correspond with the relatives of the patients, the medical officers, the solicitors, and, when the patients are capable of doing so, with the patients themselves. Then, again, he has to keep in constant communication with the Masters of Lunacy as to the state of the inmates and their manangement, and he has also to communicate with the Lords Justices as to the various items of the business which necessarily comes under their supervision. He has, of course, to prepare the business of the Board, to take the minutes, and to clear the minute book. Then, in addition to all this, he has to superintend the other clerks in the performance of their duties. Now, I do not think that anyone who knows the circumstances of the case will be prepared to say that this gentleman has not always discharged his duties with complete satisfaction to all who have been brought into communication with him in the matter. Therefore, I cannot but think it is a somewhat hard case that he should be still regarded as only a first-class clerk, and that he should only have the salary of a first-class clerk, not even being treated as a chief clerk. I do not see why the office should not have its secretary as well as other offices of a similar kind. This gentleman has substantially and practically discharged the duties of secretary for 11 years to the complete satisfaction of everybody, and surely he is suitable for a better position than that which he holds. It will be stated that the Government are anxious to secure economy in the administration of the public funds; but we ought to be equally anxious that this economy should not be effected at the expense of a faithful public servant, who, for a long series of years, has served the country well. The gentleman of whom I speak has been 41 years in the office, and his capabilities are well known. He is trusted to the extent I have described, and no fault has ever been found with him for the way in which he has performed his duties. I therefore wish to have some expression of opinion from the Government upon the subject; and I should like to ask whether, when the Lunacy Bill is being pushed forward, something may not be introduced into it to modify, in some respect, the organization of this office, and to give due consideration to the valuable services of this gentleman?

Mr. CONYBEARE: I should like to ask a question in reference to certain offices to which a large salary is attached. I see, on page 205, that there is a Secretary of Presentations, who, I notice, receives not only a salary of £400 as secretary, but various other emoluments of £50, and so on, for other services. In addition to that there is a note stating that the present Secretary of Presentations acts as clerk in the office of the Clerk of Parliaments. I should like some information as to what the duties are which are performed by the Secretary of Presentations, who is also a clerk in the office of the Clerk of Parliaments. One would imagine that the duties of one department would be quite sufficient, and I should like to know whether this gentleman is overpaid by the various salaries he receives? Then there is also a Messenger of the Great Seal, to which it does not appear that a large salary is attached, seeing that it is simply £10; and there is a train-bearer to the Lord Chancellor. As we have a train-bearer to Mr. Speaker, I presume that the Lord Chancellor is equally entitled to a train-bearer, although I am bound to say that I consider a train-bearer a very useless piece of furniture. I have no objection either to Mr. Speaker or the Lord Chancellor having a train-bearer; but I want to know whether these officers have more to do than train-bearing? On the next page—page 206—there is a note which refers to the personal following of the Vice Chancellors. I was certainly under the impression that the last of the Vice Chancellors was Vice Chancellor Bacon, and that he has been dead for some time. Then, again, there is an item in the Vote for redundant clerks. That is a matter which, I think, requires explanation; at any rate, it is anything but clear to my mind. If the clerks are redundant, I certainly do not see why we should have to pay for them. I want to know in what sense these clerks are redundant? A similar item occurs several times in the course of the Estimates, and I think it requires a little explanation. On page 212 I see there is an item for compensation to the senior Registrar of the Probate Court, and three other Registrars connected with the Court. Are these compensation allowances to be paid out of the superannuation fund, and, in the case of the Chief Registrar, is this compensation allowance made in addition to the salary of £1,600 he receives for other services? In this case the compensation allowance amounts to a very large sum, and I fail to see why we should give compensation allowances at all to officers who are capable of useful employment in the Public Service, and whose offices have been taken from them without the offices themselves being abolished. I do not see why gentlemen placed in such circumstances should be entitled to make a profit out of them. If the Government take existing offices from them owing to the abolition of such offices, and grant them such large compensation allowances, is there any necessity for providing them with such large salaries in addition? Surely there should be no need of compensation when all that is done is to take away sinecure offices for the purpose of promoting the persons who hold them to new offices where they get an increased salary. If that is the principle, I desire to know whether in this case we are to understand these large compensation allowances are in addition to, or are taken into consideration as forming part of, the present salary this gentleman receives? These are the principal points upon which I wish to ask for information.

SIR RICHARD WEBSTER: The hon. Member must be aware that if we are to secure economy it is desirable to utilize, in the Public Service, the men who happen to hold offices which it is considered desirable to abolish. Many of the reforms which are required cannot possibly be carried into effect until vacancies occur. It would be most unwise to abolish existing offices at the cost of having to pay men for doing nothing; and, therefore, it is that actual changes which are eventually to take place do not occur until vacancies arise. From all I know as to what is going on the whole subject of the abolition of certain offices and the utilization of the present holders in other Government Offices is now under consideration with a view to economy. I am sorry that I cannot give a more specific explanation of what is taking place, because I have not made an inquiry lately as to what is being done in reference to the Report of the Committee. In answer to the hon. Member for the Camborne Division of Cornwall (Mr. Conybeare), the Secretary for Presentations is a gentleman who has held that office for many years in the Lord Chancellor's Department. The Lord Chancellor has a large number of livings in his gift, and there is an enormous amount of correspondence in reference to the presentations. The salary of this officer is what has been stated by the hon. Member. He is a clerk in the office of the Clerk of Parliaments in the House of Lords, and has a salary of £400 a-year for performing the whole of the work connected with the presentations to livings. In regard to the train-bearer to the Lord Chancellor, I do not suppose that the hon. Gentleman seriously challenges that item. He allows a train-bearer to the Speaker of the House of Commons, and I think he is prepared to allow one to the Lord Chancellor. With regard to the pensions paid to Proctors, I may remind hon. Members how that matter stands. Fifteen or 20 years ago Doctors Commons was a close borough, and the old Ecclesiastical and Admiralty Courts were the happy hunting grounds of the proctors who enjoyed a monopoly of the practice. This business was thrown open about the year 1858 as nearly as I can recollect, and annuities were allowed to the men who were disestablished at that time of one-half of their income. Many of them were literally thrown out of employment, and some of them have since entered the Public Service. The senior Registrar draws, in addition to his salary as Registrar of the Probate Court, the half salary pension that is allowed him in consequence of the abolition of his former office in Doctors Commons. The compensation allowances he receives has nothing whatever to do with any Government Office; it is simply an annuity of half the annual income in consideration of the whole body of Proctors giving up the office they held and the rights they possessed of practising in Doctors Commons. Ultimately the offices were thrown open. Very few of the old Proctors are alive now, but those who are in existence have received this allowance ever since the offices were abolished. There is no connection whatever between the compensation for the abolition of the office of Proctor and the services which the Registrar is rendering to the High Court of Justice.

Mr. CONYBEARE: The hon. and learned Gentleman has said nothing about the redundant clerks.

Sir RICHARD WEBSTER: I am sorry that I am unable at the present moment to answer that question. I do not know what that item refers to.

Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): It has always seemed to me far better that when any sort of compensation is given to a public servant it should be merged at the rate of so much per annum in any other office which he may hereafter hold. I find in this Vote an item for the Petty Bag Office of £800, with a second clerk at £400, and a third at £200. Some years ago I asked a Question about this Petty Bag Office of the Predecessor of the hon. and learned Gentleman. He could tell me nothing about it. It appeared then, from what was stated in the House, that the Office of the Petty Bag had at one time something to do, but that it has absolutely nothing to do now. The functions of the office are now done away with entirely, and it is an admitted fact that the office has nothing to do. It is admitted by the House and by the Attorney General in Opposition who generally takes a larger view of these cases than the Attorney General in Office. Then, unless the hon. and learned Gentleman can explain that these people have something to do, I really think that we ought to refuse the Vote by which it is maintained. I asked for an explanation from his Predecessor, and I failed to get one; the Government having virtually thrown up the case.

Mr. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee): Before the Vote is taken, there are two general subjects on which I wish to make an appeal to the Secretary to the Treasury. Of all the overpaid officials in this country, none are so overpaid as those who who hold minor and obscure legal appointments. Anyone who looks over the Estimate will find numberless examples of that fact, and anyone who is acquainted with the obscure legal appointments which do not come under this Estimate at all will know that my remark is only too true. The second observation I wish to make has reference to the private influence—amounting to nepotism—which prevails more largely in this Department of the Public Service than anywhere else. I will only allude to one example of this kind in connection with the higher rank of these obscure legal appointments. The names of the Judges will be found to occur very frequently and suspiciously in connection with these minor appointments, especially in regard to those over which the Judges themselves have control. I hope the time will come when appointments of this nature will be taken out of the hands of those who fill high official positions themselves. I have been glad to hear the promise of the Attorney General, guarded and restricted as it was, that some action will be taken in reference to the Report of the influential Committee to which reference has been made by the hon. Member for East Donegal (Mr. Arthur O'Connor). At the same time, I must say that I have no hope that anything will be done in the direction of reducing the number of officials of this class until the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) is again in Office and takes it in hand. I think the noble Lord is to be congratulated on the success which has attended his efforts this Session in reference to the Army Estimates, and I hope he will continue the same line of action and apply his efforts to other branches of the Public Service. I regret that the noble Lord is not at this moment in his place; but I see the hon. Member for Preston (Mr. Hanbury) present, on whom the mantle of the noble Lord has fallen. I trust that the hon. Member and the noble Lord, relying as they may do upon active support from this side of the House, will tackle this and other Estimates with the same energy which they have already applied to the Army Estimates.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I entirely agree with my hon. Friend who has just down with regard to the efforts, in a public point of view, which have been made by the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington to reduce the expenditure of this country. I believe that no Minister of late years has done a more signal public service in matters of economy and public expenditure than the noble Lord. Although, unfortunately, he is no longer on the Treasury Bench, I believe that what he has done will bear good fruit in the future. I do not, however, agree with my hon. and learned Friend in another observation he made—namely, that the answer of the Attorney General to the questions which were put to him was satisfactory and hopeful. I do not know whether the hon. and learned Gentleman has actually read the Report of the Committee in question, of which Committee the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for India is a Member. I think if he had done so he would scarcely have arrived at the conclusion that it was adequate to the occasion to give the answer which the Attorney General did. There is no doubt that in these Votes there are hundreds of thousands of pounds given away annually to men who are not earning their salaries. There are many men paid large annual salaries in this Vote who have little or nothing to do, and the Attorney General tells us that the House of Commons is to continue to pay these salaries until vacancies occur. There are men receiving many hundreds a-year—some of them salaries as high as £1,000 and £1,500 a-year—who do not do a day's work from one year's end to the other. I really think that the Vote ought to be reduced, although, looking at the attenuated condition of the House at this moment, it is almost hopeless to expect to effect any reasonable reduction. I see on this page of the Estimates, in which the salaries of the Masters appear, that there is a charge of £6,000 for the Official Referees of the Supreme Court, four in number. I remember with some satisfaction dealing with this Vote five or six years ago, and I was then successful in reducing the amount by £1,500, after a protracted struggle, on the simple ground that the officer charged for had no existence, and that the office itself had not been filled up for several years. We are charged in this Estimate for 16 Masters, and I maintain that the majority of these Masters do not do a day's work a week. The Committee declare, from the evidence adduced before them, first, that it has not been found necessary by the Masters to attend from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., or, even as the Judges do, from 10.30 a.m. to 4 p.m. They never give a full day's attendance at all. Secondly, they make arrangements among themselves to absent themselves from their ordinary duties; these arrangements are almost of universal occurrence. In fact, these worthy Masters invariably arrange among themselves to be, at least, one day away every week. Thirdly, the seven persons who were created Masters under the Act of 1879 have, in fact, not been called upon to undertake the general duties of Masters at all. I speak under correction, but I think I am right in saying that the authority of the Masters has increased under Order 54, Rule 12, of the Rules of the Supreme Court. They receive some £200, £300, and £500 a-year, their jurisdiction in Chambers having been extended, and they have received authority to discharge other duties which they were not previously authorized to discharge. In consideration of that fact their salaries were materially increased; but since that date they appear, if anything, to have had rather less to do than they had before. The Committee expressed an opinion that the time had now arrived when these Masters should participate, to the best of their ability, in the work apportioned to them at the time the offices were rearranged. Was there ever such a Report made in regard to any public servants? It simply means that the time has now arrived when these Masters are to endeavour to earn their salaries; and because they really fail to do a day's work—I will not say that there is any Master who is unwilling to perform it to the best of his ability; but if he fails to do the work he is at liberty to retire from the office on the pension to which he is entitled by Act of Parliament. The Attorney General does not even go as far as that. He says that we must wait until a vacancy occurs. I contend that the Government themselves ought to make a vacancy whenever they find that a man is inefficient, or is disinclined to work. We have here the strongest representations that were ever made by any Committee with regard to any question in reference to the organization of judicial offices. We have here distinct and emphatic statements that the Masters have not sufficient work to fill up their time, and so conscious are the Masters of that fact that they never attend at all on Saturdays or Mondays, as anybody knows who has occasion to go to Chambers. The Masters are never there at all on those days. [The SOLICITOR GENERAL (Sir Edward Clarke) dissented.] I see that the Solicitor General shakes his head; but I am afraid that he has forgotten his junior days. I would ask him to consult any practising solicitor as to his experience of the attendance of the Masters. Among other things which the Masters used to be connected with was the duty of taxing costs. What is the state of that taxation business now? It is most disgracefully in arrear. The taxation of bills of costs are put down in the diaries of the Masters for appointments weeks and weeks in advance, and even then a large number of bills of costs are thrown over the Long Vacation, because the men appointed to discharge the work in the Law Courts do not care to do an honest day's work. The delay which has occurred in taxing bills of costs is nothing short of a public scandal. I know that the hon. and learned Gentleman opposite the Attorney General objects to that word; but I am speaking the simple truth, and I think I am using very moderate language in regard to it. The delay which occurs in taxing bills of costs is nothing short of a scandal. I know of a case, which occurred only the other day, in which it took practically the whole of the year in order to get a bill of costs, of no very difficult character, taxed. If the Attorney General wishes, I will lay the case before him. It is, however, only one specimen of the condition to which this Office has been reduced; and I believe that it applies to every single branch of the Courts of Justice. There is not, I believe, a single paragraph or passage in this Report—although it extends over many folios —which does not show that there is immense room for reduction in the public expenditure, and also in the number of the staff. I believe that by a little re-adjustment of the work a considerable portion of the expenditure might be saved. One of the greatest grievances now is that the Masters' duty is altogether evaded. The staff as it exists is more than enough to discharge all the business; but, notwithstanding the fact that there is business enough to fill their whole time, they have got into habits of idleness, and have allowed the work to get into such arrear that the offices themselves have become disorganized. I hope we shall elicit from the Attorney General something more hopeful than the assurances he has already given to us. The Report of the Royal Commission shows that the proper remedy is the reduction of the staff. In order to enforce what I have said I will propose not to reduce the staff by the seven Masters who were appointed in 1879, but to move the reduction of the Vote by the amount of the salary of one Master—namely, £1,500 a-year; and I also wish to give Notice that I shall carefully watch the subject between this and next year, with a view of moving a further reduction if the work is not satisfactorily performed. I think I am discharging a public duty in saying that the Masters, to whose neglect of duty I have referred in regard to their attendance, are Masters Gordon, Walton, Pollock, and Brook. I beg to move that the Vote be reduced by the sum of £1,500, the salary of one Master.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £249,238, be granted for the said Services."—(*Mr. Arthur O'Connor.*)

SIR RICHARD WEBSTER: The hon. Gentleman has complained of the way in which I answered his first question. The hon. Gentleman will remember that he made a general statement, and that he did not call my attention to any specific case, or give me the slightest notice in regard to the points he intended to raise. I had no idea that he intended to enter into these matters in detail, and because I did not specifically deal with the various matters he has referred to he has complained of my answer. All I can say is that, not knowing the points to which he desired to direct attention, I gave the best answer I could in a general way, without, in any respect, desiring to minimize the importance of the question. The hon. Gentleman has referred to the time which has elapsed between the presentation of this Report and the presentation of the Estimates; but I think his criticism has scarcely any foundation. The detailed Report on which the hon. Member has founded his arguments was not presented until the 15th of March this year, and time has not, therefore, permitted the Treasury to bring into effect a practical reduction of the Estimates in accordance with the recommendations contained in the Report. I admit—and I think I had admitted it when I spoke before—that the whole question of the organization of the central offices of the Royal Courts requires consideration. The hon. Gentleman says that no Master does a day's work. Although I have not for many years practised as a junior barrister, I do not believe that that sweeping assertion is well-founded. I quite admit that some years ago the hours were probably less than might be expected in connection with such appointments; but although it may be true that some of the older Masters have not worked as many hours as might be expected, yet others come early and sit late. I do not say that there is no room for improvement, but I do not think there is any ground for a serious attack upon the mode in which the Masters discharge their duty. With regard to the recommendations of the Committee to which the hon. Member has referred, they certainly do not go as far as he suggests. The Committee recommended that ultimately 15 Masters would be sufficient to do the work. At present there are 16, although there is power to have 18, and I understand the recommendation will be carried out by not appointing a successor when the first vacancy occurs. Then, again, the hon. Member says there is a great deal of taxing business in arrear. I do not object, in the least degree, to the word "scandal," if used when it is the proper word. All I said was in reference to an entirely different matter which was mooted this afternoon, and I said that I thought it did not merit the description given to it of "scandal." Nor do I think that the matters which have taken place in connection with the taxation of bills of costs deserves the word "scandal." If the hon. Member will bring before me any specific case I should be only too glad to communicate with the Taxing Masters, as I have done already, at the request of other Members of this House, and the result of my communication has been to show that there has not been any neglect on the part of those who are engaged in taxing these bills. Indeed, it is a question in regard to which a good deal may be said on both sides. As a matter of fact, there is a good deal of difficulty in getting the bills sent in; and, no doubt, shortly before the Long Vacation there is pressure upon the Office. If the hon. Gentleman wishes me to inquire into any particular case I will do so. And now let me say one word in regard to the Official Referees. I do not think the hon. Member has done these gentlemen justice.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I did not complain of the present Referees.

SIR RICHARD WEBSTER: I am pleased to hear the hon. Member say so. Although they are in the early years of office I believe that the work they do is well appreciated by the public, and that they have their time fully occupied up to the period of the Long Vacation. Mr. Ridley told me that his list of appointments was quite filled up to the 15th of October, and that he is unable to fix any other appointment, which is a proof that the business of these gentlemen is being properly attended to. I think I have now fully dealt with all the matters which the hon. Member for East Donegal has brought under my notice, and I can assure him that the questions he has raised will not be overlooked by those who are interested in them. I am indebted to the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) for reminding me that about two years ago a Question was put in this House with regard to the Office of Petty Bag. Since then he has, no doubt, been engrossed by other affairs of State, and only to-day has found time to revert to the subject. More by accident than by any merit of my own I happen to have obtained, since the time that Question was put, some information in regard to the office, and I was, fortunately, able to put my hand upon it this afternoon. I do not complain of the burning anxiety which the hon. Member evinces for information in regard to the Petty Bag Office; but I may inform him that the duties performed by the clerk of the Petty Bag are useful, and must be performed by somebody. Perhaps it may not be necessary to fill up the office again, but the duties must be performed by some other clerk. The sole reason for not putting an end to the office at once was that the age of the present holder did not render it desirable in the public interest to compensate him. The duties of the office consist in registering articles of clerkship for solicitors, enrolling solicitors in the Supreme Court, sending certificates to the Master of the Rolls for signature, taking in monthly notices, and a number of other formal matters, some of which must be performed by some clerk. I have been told that the office will not be kept alive after the present holder vacates it. If the hon. Member has any suggestion to make as to how the duties ought to be transferred, I should be glad to consider it; but, as I have said, there are substantial duties which must be performed by someone.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): I wish to know what course the Government intend to take with respect to the Report of the Committee and the central office? I am bound to say that to me the Report of the Committee is not altogether satisfactory, and that it does not deal adequately with the grievances brought before the Committee, while the remedies which are recommended are very insufficient, when we look at the evidence on which the Report is based. I am very doubtful as to the value of these Departmental Committees; but I concur with what the hon. and learned Member for Dundee (Mr. E. Robertson) has said in reference to the Committee now sitting upstairs. I say that the very best sort of inquiry into the details of the public expenditure is one that is conducted by a Select Committee of this House. The Committee presided over by the noble Lord the Member for Paddington shows that that is the very best Court of Inquiry in matters of this kind; and if the labours of the noble Lord and his coadjutors were extended to the various branches of the Civil Service, I am satisfied that they would result in very much greater efficiency and economy. I believe that in reference to the enormous sum which is now being spent annually on our Supreme Court, it might be better expended, and secure better work, if we were to employ fewer men at much lower salaries. I have said that, in my opinion, the Report of the Committee is insufficient and ineffective; but I want to know what course the Government propose to take? Is the Report to be pigeon-holed, and are they not going to act upon it? I think that nothing short of legislation will be adequate to meet the emergency of the case, and the House is entitled to hear from the Government whether they intend seriously to take the Report into consideration, and submit to Parliament next Session, through the action of the Treasury, or through the action of the House, some plan for dealing with the matter, or for dealing with, to use the word which my hon. and learned Friend used, the "scandal" which prevails in connection with the Department which is entrusted with the administration of justice in this country. I must enter my protest against the theory which pervaded the whole of the speech of the Attorney General that gentlemen who accept office in the Civil Service have a right to say—"When I took that office the hours were so and so, and I have a right to claim the abolition terms now that the hours and the duties have been altered."

SIR RICHARD WEBSTER: I did not say so.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER: I did not say that the hon. and learned Gentleman did; but it rather struck me that that was the theory which pervaded the whole of his speech. I hold that we have a right to expect from every man a fair day's work for a fair day's wages; and I trust we shall at once dismiss the idea that public servants, who do not render one-half of the time that would be required from them if they were engaged in private enterprize, are entitled to retire on pensions the moment any change is made in the duties of the Department. I believe that the Non-Effective Service is now costing this country nearer £7,000,000 than £6,000,000 annually, and every change which is made increases the number of pensions. I object to the practice altogether. A military man obeys the command of the Crown, and goes wherever he is sent—to Egypt or to India, or anywhere else. No man in the Military or Naval Service has a right to pick and choose. If he does not like the Service of the Crown let him leave it; but as long as he is paid a full salary the Crown has a right to the whole of his services. When we are dealing with highly-paid officials, if we find a Department where the work is not sufficient to give full employment we have a right to add additional duties. I trust the Secretary to the Treasury will give the Committee an assurance that the Government intend to act on the Report of the Departmental Committee; to carry the recommendations contained in the Report further, and, if necessary, to give effect to them by legislation.

MR. PICTON: I think I am entitled to some little explanation in regard to the point which I raised.

MR. JACKSON: The hon. Member for Leicester has called my attention to the fact that one of the first-class clerks is an excellent officer, and does a great deal of work, and, in his opinion, is eligible for promotion to the *status* of a chief clerk. He says that this first-class clerk does much excellent work, and he went on to say that he is not even a chief clerk. I may, however, point out that there is only one chief clerk.

MR. PICTON: I mentioned the suppression of the office of secretary, which was the case I was anxious to meet.

MR. JACKSON: Yes; and there are six other first-class clerks, in regard to whose offices suppressions will have to take place. It is intended to reduce the number to four as vacancies arise. I believe that the actual number in employment now is five. There are six third-class clerks, which number it is also intended to reduce to four.

MR. PICTON: The Visitors in Lunacy used to have a secretary of their own, and there is now only one first-class clerk, and a chief clerk to the Visitors. The first-class clerk has really the entire management of the business.

MR. JACKSON: I understood the hon. Gentleman to refer to the first-class clerk to the office of Masters in Lunacy. There is a chief clerk there.

MR. PICTON: No; my remarks applied to the Visitors in Lunacy.

MR. JACKSON: I am quite prepared to admit that this officer is in himself an excellent officer and servant; but I think the hon. Member will hardly expect me to join him in advocating in this House the raising of that gentleman's salary or position. I can assure the hon. Member that my position is a most unpleasant one in having to resist constant applications of this kind, which are made to me not only outside but inside this House. I therefore hope the hon. Member will rest content with having called attention to the excellent services of this officer without pressing me to raise his salary or promote him. The hon. Member for the Camborne Division of Cornwall has made some reference to the redundant clerks.

MR. CONYBEARE: The items I refer to appear upon pages 209 and 215, one of which amounts to the sum of £3,000. There appear to be five of these redundant clerks.

MR. JACKSON: The redundant clerks arise from what is called the re-organization of the office. The hon. Gentleman knows that of late years, in order to effect greater efficiency in the work, it has been found necessary to undertake the re-organization of a particular office, and when that is done you have a choice of evils, either to retire particular clerks on a pension, or to keep them on as redundant clerks, and endeavour to absorb them in other Departments as vacancies arise. I am quite prepared to say that I have no sympathy with redundant clerks. I look upon men in that position as not being very useful public servants. They are not even square men in a round hole, but they are in no hole at all. But at times it is a question of great difficulty to know how to deal with the abolition of offices when the work of re-organization is being carried out in reference to any particular Department. The question of compensation and superannuation is, no doubt, a very important one; but, at the same time, it is one that it is very difficult to deal with. I have entertained strong feelings on the question; but you must carry out the contracts you have entered into with the servants already in the service of the State, and if any good is to be effected in regard to the question it must be faced in regard to the question as a whole, and as a question of future policy in connection with the whole of the Public Service. We have no right, however, to break our contracts with existing public servants, and I am afraid, therefore, that in carrying out reforms we must have, from time to time, redundant clerks. I have been asked by my right hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) what action the Government are prepared to take in regard to the Report of the Departmental Committee. I am not in a position actually to pledge the Government to bring in the legislation necessary to give effect to the Report; but it has been read and re-read at the Treasury with very great care and attention, and I can promise my right hon. Friend that the Government will give full effect to it as far as they can.

MR. CONYBEARE: I see that the second Order of the Day is the Superannuation Acts Amendment Bill. I certainly hope and trust that the Government are not going to press that Bill forward to-night.

Mr. JACKSON: No.

Mr. CONYBEARE: I am glad to hear it. In regard to what has been said by the hon. Gentleman as to redundant clerks and the question of superannuation, I trust that whatever legislation the Government propose to introduce will have the opportunity of receiving full consideration at the hands of the House. I am quite satisfied for the present with having elicited from the hon. Gentleman the frank answer he gave to my question, and I am exceedingly indebted to him for the admission—for that is what it practically amounts to—that these redundant clerks are really clerks on compensation or pension allowances. These compensations, superannuations, and pensions are constantly cropping up, and I am afraid we shall have to go through the whole question again when we reach Class VI. of these Estimates. What I wish to call attention to is the exceeding injustice which one class of public servants is treated as compared with another. At one end of the scale, if a man's office is abolished when the Department is re-organized he is compensated or pensioned; while at the other end of the scale—for instance, in the case of Dockyard labourers and artizans—they are turned off, their homes broken up—I speak with knowledge of the fact, for some of these men are among my own constituents—and reduced to starvation with, at most, a week's notice, and without one farthing of compensation. We never hear of their claims, and yet, if any class of public servants deserve compensation, assuredly these Dockyard artizans and labourers do. In the case of these Civil Service clerks there is not one of them who ever did more than six hours' work a-day; whereas the artizans and labourers in the Dockyards have to work 10 or 12 hours—to start early in the morning and leave late at night. Yet they are liable to be turned off whenever the work is slack without the slightest consideration for past services, and nothing is offered to them beyond a week's notice. What I say is, let these pensions by superannuation allowances be made equal, and go to the bottom of the scale as well as the top. Personally, I am not in favour of superannuation allowances at all. Give the men a round sum and have done with it. I do not wish to contend for a moment that the State should break faith with anybody with whom a contract has been entered into; but when there is the reconstruction of a Department I would suggest that the contracts should be of shorter duration, and that new servants should be liable to receive notice to quit, say, at the end of six months or a year. The same rule should be applicable to all Civil servants, including the highly-paid officials who enjoy comfortable apartments in the Public Offices, have very light duties to perform, and who spend a considerable portion of the day in reading the newspaper before they commence their public duties. I shall certainly keep my eye upon this matter, and I can assure hon. Members opposite that if these discharges of the Dockyard labourers are continued another year as they have been of late, and superannuation allowances, pensions, and compensations continue to be given to persons at the other end of the scale, I shall seriously consider what steps ought to be taken to impress the injustice of the system with force, and, perhaps, in a disagreeable manner, upon Her Majesty's Government.

Mr. E. ROBERTSON: I wish to call the attention of the Secretary to the Treasury to a matter which is, perhaps, of minor importance, but which is of some public interest—I refer to the Vote for the Pay Office of the Supreme Court. I do not propose to challenge any items in the Vote; but I want to call the hon. Gentleman's attention to the large amount of dissatisfaction which exists in the public mind with respect to the manner in which a portion of the business of that office is managed. I refer to the unclaimed funds in Chancery, the management of which is in the hands of the officer mentioned here. No public office causes a larger amount of heartbreaking among the ignorant public, or raises more unfounded hopes, than this branch of the Supreme Court. It is believed by many persons that the amount of the unclaimed funds in Chancery reaches something like £100,000,000 sterling. There exists, not only in London, but in the Provinces, flourishing agencies which lay themselves out to deceive the public by the most grossly exaggerated statements of the amount of money lying in the charge of the Pay

Office. I have been told by a gentleman connected with the Press that one particular adventurer must have been spending as much as £350 a-week in advertisements asking people to apply to him for information which will lead them to realize fortunes in reference to these funds. As a matter of fact, the real amount, as the hon. Gentleman told me in answer to a Question a short time ago—the real amount of unclaimed money in the Court of Chancery is not much more than £1,000,000. The largest unclaimed estate does not exceed £15,000, and most of the amounts relate to small estates of £200 or £300. I think it is of the highest importance that the mystery surrounding this Chancery Fund should, as far as possible, be dispelled, and that is the object of my appeal to the Secretary to the Treasury now. A curious incident happened the other day. Some hon. Members noticed a very dilapidated elderly gentleman passing up and down the pavement in front of this House between two sandwich boards, upon each of which was an appeal to the public denouncing the Government and the Members of this House for the alleged systematic robbery that is perpetrated upon the country in regard to unclaimed funds. That person believes that the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury and his Colleagues, and the Court of Chancery, are keeping from him an estate, now in Chancery, of £7,000,000. That is this man's honest belief, and no doubt many of the public who read the statement believe it also. It is mainly in order to get rid of the false hopes engendered in the public mind, and to stop the nefarious traffic on the part of certain advertising agents, that the Secretary to the Treasury should direct his attention to the question whether or not more information can be supplied as to the details of the fund, which, as we know, only amounts to something like £1,000,000. I am quite aware of the difficulty of giving the detailed information which the public would like to have; and I believe that the books of the Pay Office alone would not convey much as to the persons who are entitled to this fund. No doubt that necessarily follows from the way in which the books are kept; but possibly something might be done by an investigation of the orders under which the money has been paid into Court. At any rate, this at least might be done—the hon. Gentleman, on the occasion of his next triennial statement, might see his way to publish the amount of the fund in the hands of the Court. The public would rely more upon a statement of that kind than upon a mere statement made by a Member of this House; and it would be seen how small the total amount of the fund really is, as well as the smallness of the items which stand in the name of the Department of the Pay Office. One other suggestion I have to make is this. I hope that hon. Gentlemen, at all events, will try to give as much information as possible concerning this mysterious deposit which has misled so many innocent people. At any rate, he can do this. Many of these sums, small and contemptible as they are, have been standing there for a long time. Besides making public all that can be known as to the nature and ownership of the money, I suggest that the shortest way out of the difficulty will be to make an end of the whole fund—to confiscate the moneys and appropriate them to the use of the State. By adopting something in the nature of a Statute of Limitations concerning the funds held by the Pay Office an end would be put to the mysteries and mischief which at present attach to this fund.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.): My hon. Friend the Member for East Donegal has moved the reduction of this Vote, and I intend to support his Motion. I feel bound to protest against the tone adopted by the hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General in replying to the observations of my hon. Friend. The hon. and learned Member complained very strongly of the language used by my hon. Friend, who made serious charges against a certain class of officers, and against the maladministration of some of the Government Departments. Since my hon. Friend made his remarks I have taken the trouble to read the Report on which he founded his complaint, and I have arrived at the conclusion that they are mildness itself. So far from being too strong, they are more than justified by the facts which were elicited by the Evidence and Report of the Committee. I agree with the right hon. Member for Wolverhampton that there is ample room for the investigation of these

Civil Service Estimates by a Select Committee of this House, and I am afraid that the House of Commons will make no real progress in the direction of economy until such an inquiry is undertaken. At the same time, I cannot see why Her Majesty's Government should feel it their duty to take hon. Members to task when they bring forward grievances upon matters of this kind, and accuse hon. Members who bring them forward of making statements more or less extravagant from personal motives. I think it is the duty of every Member of the House to inquire, as far as possible, into the details of these Estimates, and to see whether they have been prepared with a due regard to economy. No doubt the reason why we have had this awakened interest in these Civil Service Estimates is the success of the course which has been pursued in regard to the Army Estimates. It was not because it was not well known that abuses existed in regard to the military expenditure of the country, but because the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington, having retired from the Government in a huff, drew public attention to these matters, and got a vast amount of credit for the inquiry which, at his instance, was instituted. I think the credit ought to be shared by hon. Members who have constantly spoken upon these matters, but who have not had the same opportunity of directing public attention to them. I cannot say that I approve of the tone in which the hon. and learned Attorney General replied to my hon. Friend. My hon. Friend drew attention to a specific grievance, upon which a Departmental Committee has reported plainly; and it seems that the sum and substance of the reform which has been effected is that the number of Masters has been cut down from 17 to 16. The Attorney General said that he was in favour of the number being 15; but the recommendation of the Committee goes further than that—namely, that the Masters who were appointed under the Act of 1879 had, as a matter of fact, not been called upon to perform the technical duty of Masters.

Sir RICHARD WEBSTER: Those are not the Masters who were referred to by the hon. Member for East Donegal.

Mr. FLYNN: With all due respect, my hon. Friend referred to the whole of the Masters in the Supreme Court.

Sir RICHARD WEBSTER: Yes; but not to these seven. He said nothing about them.

Mr. FLYNN: I trust that the Committee will go through the full details of these appointments. I do not by any means desire that the Committee should inquire into the wages paid to every charwoman employed in the Public Service, or into the salaries of porters and messengers; but, in my opinion, there can be no doubt that gross jobbery and corruption exist in many departments, and until hon. Members in every quarter of the House take the question of economy up, there will not be that fruitful expenditure of public money and that good administration which all political Parties are interested in establishing.

Mr. HANBURY (Preston): I wish to back up what has been stated by the hon. and learned Member for Dundee (Mr. E. Robertson). I do not know how far it extends to the towns. Everybody who has had any experience of the villages of the country must know that the question raised by the hon. Member is a very serious matter indeed. There are few villages where one would not find three or four people who have been taken in by such advertising, and who have spent a great deal of money in trying to get estates which have had no real existence. I think the matter is a very important one, and I hope the Government will try to do something in regard to it.

Mr. JACKSON: I may say at once that I entirely sympathize with the desire which has been expressed by hon. Gentlemen on both sides of the House to do something to prevent or lessen the inconvenience and even hardship inflicted on poor people by the system referred to. But the question is, in what way is it to be met? And that is not an easy question. These frauds—for such they may be termed—were perpetrated upon poor people by persons who, having got some information from the statements now made public, proceeded to trade upon it, and get people to pay them fees, on the pretence of searching for estates which are vested in certain names, and so on. What I feel about the matter is this—I feel that if we increase the amount of information which is published, the more scope will be given for the operations of such persons. I feel that the question is a very important one, and I promise the hon. Member that it shall receive full consideration. Looking to the importance of the question, I have made a memorandum to consider with those responsible whether anything can be done to dissipate the very large amount of unreal anticipation indulged in from time to time, and check. if possible, the frauds which are perpetrated. I quite agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Preston that in the country districts these societies do great mischief; and the discussion which has taken place to-day may, I hope, do something to put the persons who are likely to become the victims of the fraud upon their guard, and to prevent them from paying fees for results which can never be realized.

MR. CONYBEARE: I entirely sympathize with what has been said on both sides of the House. Not merely is there an unreal expectation produced in the minds of these people, but hon. Members themselves are made the victims of these frauds. I have myself received letters from some of my constituents, asking me to take action for them in reference to some of these estates which they feel themselves to be entitled to, and I have often found myself in a position of great difficulty about the matter. Some time ago I saw published in *The Daily Chronicle* and *The Daily Telegraph* a copy of rules issued by the High Court of Justice, showing how persons are to proceed for the purpose of claiming these bogus fortunes. I took the trouble to have it reprinted in a local newspaper, in order to relieve myself of a certain amount of trouble. As I presume these rules were published by authority, is it not possible, in a fresh publication of the rules, to give the further information which the hon. and learned Member for Dundee has suggested, and which will prove useful information to all who imagine they have any interest in the matter. I do not say who the offenders are who are trying to make a living by the publication of the advertisements which have been referred to; but I believe the principal firm is that of Cox and Sons, Southampton Buildings, who publish a list of 50,000 names. I have no doubt that if the hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General will look at that list he will find his own name there. I looked at the list with some curiosity, and found my own name in it. The system to which the hon. Member has called attention inflicts a hardship not only upon poor people, but also upon Members of Parliament, who have a great deal of correspondence thrown upon them in consequence of it. I think that some further information might be granted showing how far the public may rely upon the statements that are put forth. For instance, it may be possible, when publishing the rules for attendance in the High Court of Justice, to give warning that no authentic information as to this unclaimed fund can be obtained except from the High Court of Justice itself.

SIR RICHARD WEBSTER: If the hon. Member will send to the Secretary to the Treasury a copy of the rules to which he has referred, my hon. Friend will see what can be done in the matter.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I am perfectly satisfied with the discussion which I have raised, and I have no desire further to oppose the Vote. As I have no wish that the discussion should exceed due limits, I now beg leave to withdraw the Motion for the reduction of the Vote.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Original Question again proposed.

MR. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.): Before the Question is put I want to ask for a little information. The Committee is probably aware that Lord Brougham, in one of the legal reforms he effected, abolished the former superintendence over the Middlesex Registry, and created new Registrars. Now, the office of Registrar has become, strictly speaking, a sinecure. There were three, and two did nothing, one signing every quarter cheques for their salaries. Some time within the last few years two out of the three Registrars' offices became vacant, and there was a re-arrangement of the office. Two of the Chiefs of the Common Law Courts who had the patronage did not, I believe, exercise it, leaving only one sinecurist. There is a fourth Registrar who represents the public, the Queen's Remembrancer, who does not receive any share of the fees, his proportion being paid into the Exchequer.

The question I want to ask is this. At present the total fees which are paid are, I think, about £7,600; and I wish to know whether only half of this goes into the Treasury, or whether the remaining sinecurists only receive one-fourth of the whole, three-fourths going to the Exchequer?

SIR RICHARD WEBSTER: Will my right hon. Friend tell me if he is referring to any particular item in the present Vote?

MR. CHILDERS: My hon. and learned Friend will find the item I refer to on page 204 of the Estimate—"Queen's Remembrancer share of fees of Middlesex Registry—£3,800." It is rumoured that only half of those fees go to the Treasury, and that the other half is paid to the sinecurist. I wish to know whether the Government intend, as former Governments did, to put an end to this anomalous state of things?

SIR RICHARD WEBSTER: I am obliged to the right hon. Gentleman for calling my attention to the matter, and I will make inquiry. My recollection is that the fees received by the Queen's Remembrancer were handed over to the Exchequer some three or four years ago, and that the duties then devolved upon the Senior Master of the Court of Exchequer—Sir Frederick Pollock.

MR. CHILDERS: I think the Attorney General is mistaken. The Remembrancer has never received any of these fees for, at least, the last 20 years. Under the old arrangement the Remembrancer was entitled to receive a fourth of the fees; but they were always paid by him into the Exchequer, and the change in the office of Remembrancer has had no effect at all. What I want to know is what the actual division of the fees is; whether it is legal; and if it is the intention of the Government to put the matter upon a more satisfactory footing?

MR. JACKSON: I believe that the entry in the Vote represents only one-half of the fees, and that the other half is paid to Lord Truro.

MR. CHILDERS: I am afraid that the hon. Gentleman does not quite understand the question. There were four Registrars, one appointed by each of the Chiefs of the old Courts, and one representing the Court of Chancery, whose fees are now paid to the Treasury. What I want to know is—are half of those fees paid into the Exchequer in respect of the Remembrancer, and are the other half paid to the remaining sinecurist, or is there some other division, leaving the remaining sinecurist in receipt, as formerly, of only one-fourth of the total fees? I would further ask, seeing that the whole matter is so anomalous, whether the Government propose to deal with it in any way?

MR. JACKSON: I believe the right hon. Gentleman is correct in his statement of the facts, and that one-half of the fees only are paid into the Treasury. All I can is that the Government will endeavour, as far as possible, to deal with the matter.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: Out of these fees one-half, I believe, goes to Lord Truro, and I have never been able to understand on what ground he is entitled to one-half. As one of the original Registrars he may have been entitled to one-fourth of the fees; but by what process of reasoning it is made out that he is entitled to one-half I fail to understand. The whole of this Vote is full of anomalies in regard to fees of this kind; and the Treasury do not appear to realize the way in which they are going down hill in regard to the matter. I have here a paper which has been circulated to hon. Members of this House within the last fortnight. It is an account showing the receipts and expenditure of the High Court of Chancery for the year ending March, 1887. It shows that while the receipts for the year ending March, 1887, have been less than the receipts for the year ending March, 1886, on the other hand, the expenditure has gone up by no less than £6,000 in the latter year, as compared with the former—that is to say, that while the receipts have increased, and are now equal to £668,000 a-year, the result, so far as the public are concerned, is that with all the expenditure the delay in the administration of the law is getting, if anything, worse than it ever was before. You have, in connection with the administration of justice, an extravagantly paid staff and a great arrear of work; you have that staff indulging in an increasing length of holidays independent of the Long Vacation, and altogether unequalled in any other Department of the Civil Service. Let me take the Chancery Division in order to show how great-a grievance this is. In the Chancery Division the costs alone amount to no less than £2,000,000 sterling a-year; that is what the suitors have to pay for the luxury of going into the Court of Chancery—that is to say, about £10,000 for every day in which the Courts are open. In this particular Division the salaries of officials come to over £100,000 a-year. There are 310 working days in the year, and Chambers, to say nothing of the Courts, are only open upon 205, and they are in reality closed, except for a small and special amount of work, for 105 days. As they are only open for 205 days, they are for one-third of a working year practically at a standstill, and this, too, in spite of the enormous sums of money the suitors in the Courts of Chancery have to pay, and the salaries of the officials, which, as I have said, amount to more than £100,000 a-year. I say that in this particular branch the system is perfectly indefensible, and it has been recognized that something ought to be done. An inquiry has been instituted, and in regard to the Chancery Division we have had, just as we had in the case of the Central Office, a Report from a very powerful Committee on the constitution of the Division, and the mode in which the work is done. Although the Committee were not quite unanimous, still the recommendations each Committee severally made run very much on parallel lines. One of the considerations on which that Report is based is the great amount of arrears in almost every branch of the Chancery business. Going back to October, 1884, the total number of cases at that time, the beginning of the legal year, was 842. It consisted of witness actions, non-witness actions, and adjourned summonses for further consideration. The sittings began in October, 1884; on the 23rd of May, 1885, when the Courts had been at work for more than two-thirds of the legal year, the total number of cases still in the Court of Chancery was 667—that is to say, that the Court only reduced the arrears by one-third, whereas two-thirds of the sitting year had gone. Although the Committee report that the present number of Judges attached to the Chancery Division cannot cope with the work with which they have to deal, and could not satisfactorily do so even if all the arrears were wiped off, nothing practical has yet been done. Surely the administration of justice between man and man is the very first function for which any Government exists. The one great aim of the Government in regard to the internal affairs of the country is the administration of justice between subject and subject; and here you have from the men who form that Committee, including the Master of the Rolls, five of the Judges and four other eminent men, an admission or a statement of the grievous kind I have just read, dated the 7th of August, 1885, two years ago, and absolutely nothing practical has yet been done. The business is so much in arrear that the Judges are unable to cope with it. I find that in October there were 100 witness actions before Mr. Justice Kay, and by the 23rd of May there were still 92; before Mr. Justice Chitty there were 70 in October, and 80 in May; while before Mr. Justice Pearson, who, I believe, has taken more witness cases than any other Judge, the numbers were 73 in October and 46 in May. Before Mr. Justice North there were 127 in October, and after two-thirds of the legal year had passed the number had been only reduced to 83. It is in the witness cases that the delay of the Court of Chancery is most noticeable, and it must result in great public inconvenience, owing to the expense of bringing witnesses up from the country, and of keeping them in London day after day over adjournments. The Committee, on that point, report that the interruption of the trial of witness actions is one of the greatest evils of the present system; and, in the opinion of the Committee, witness actions ought to be heard continually *de die in diem*. Sir Horace Davey, one of the Committee, proposed to break up the three Judges of the Chancery Division into three Courts of two Judges each, one of each being told off for the hearing of witness actions. Mr. Justice Pearson, although he did not fall in altogether with Sir Horace Davey's scheme, admitted that it was necessary for some arrangement to be made by which witness actions should be taken without interruption This is an important point, and one that well deserves the attention of the Government as soon as they can turn to it. But there is another thing which, from a practical point of view, is also of importance, and that is the abolition of the separate offices of Registrar and Taxing Master. The delay in taxation in Chancery is just as bad as it is on the Common Law side. With regard to the grievances of the public, one of the greatest of them from a client's point of view, although it is more satisfactory from a Queen's Counsel's point of view, or a leader's point of view, is in connection with the business known as motions. The present system results in motions only being taken in the different Courts on certain days. If a suitor wants to have a certain motion made, the leaders make applications in their order of seniority, so that the juniors have practically no chance. At any rate, their chance is so limited that it would be foolish for a client to persist in entrusting the motion to a junior. The result is that he is obliged to go to a senior and to pay 20 or 30 guineas, where it would be quite possible for the same thing to be done for two or three guineas, or probably for one. Of course, the leading counsel in the different Chancery Courts are able to dictate enormous fees for making these motions. What I would suggest is that motions should be taken in every Court on every day. I believe a system of that kind would result in much greater expedition, and it would certainly result in an enormous reduction of the fees paid by suitors to counsel for moving these motions. I am quite ready to admit that this would do away with the valuable preserve which the leading counsel now enjoy; but it would be better for all classes concerned in every other respect.

Mr. MOLLOY (King's Co., Birr): I hope the Attorney General is prepared to make some reply to the statements which my hon. Friend has made. The matter is one which has been discussed regularly for the last two or three years; and I am afraid that the Government, when they are getting the Estimates at the end of the Session, do not care a straw for the public interests so long as they can secure their Vacation. Last year a promise was made from the Treasury Bench that the matter would be looked into, and the excuse then given for saying nothing on the subject was that it was new matter which had been brought on without Notice. The Government said, however, that they would inquire into the matter, and they hoped by this year to give a complete answer. Now, to my own knowledge, this subject was brought on four years ago by my hon. Friend. He was promised then that something should be done; but nothing whatever has been done in the interests of the public. I am afraid that the interests of the public are very little cared for in these legal matters in this House. So far as my experience goes, the difficulty is that whenever there are lawyers concerned you get that which is tedious, expensive, and extravagant. The motion day in Court which has been mentioned by my hon. Friend is, to my mind, one of the greatest possible frauds. It is necessary that motions should be made by senior counsel in the order of seniority, and the result is that the motions are never fully disposed of, and cost the suitors an enormous sum of money. This is an arrangement of a barristerial character; it is practically, as far as I can see, an arrangement made among the leading counsel; the leading counsel have the preference in these matters, and there is no option but to pay their fee. Of course, the hon. and learned Attorney General will get up and say that he has nothing whatever to do with the arrangement; that it is not in his Department; and that he has no power to control the arrangements of the Court. But this is not an answer which should be given by the Government in these days, because the time has arrived when a more business-like reply should be returned to a complaint of this kind. Let us take the case of arrears. My own experience is that the longer the Vacation the better it is for the public; but, unfortunately, the public will go to law, and, as a consequence, under the present system the list of arrears is simply astonishing. There is no country in Europe where the law is so tedious and expensive as it is in England. My hon. Friend near me says that the Judges, barristers, and professional men take a vacation of one-third of a-year, but I say that it is much nearer half-a-year. There is no other profession which has a half-year's Vacation; yet the practice has grown up among lawyers, and there seems to be no means of stopping it without the interference of the Government. The result of this is that the unfortunate litigants, having brought up their witnesses to London at a large expense, after hanging about the Courts and incurring charges which are simply frightful when compared with the amounts, as a rule, in dispute, have to wait during the Vacation of 150 days before their cases are heard. I ask whether the Government cannot give us some assurance that there will be an alteration in this respect? The question is not a Party question; it is a matter which concerns the public interest; and I sincerely trust that the present Government, which professes to represent the public interest, will say that this grievance, which no one can deny is a serious one, shall be looked into and, if possible, removed. I think it will be a very simple matter to deal with this question. You may either appoint more Judges, or, what would be infinitely better, make the Judges you have do a greater amount of work than they do at present, and not take, as my hon. and learned Friend does, half-a-year for Vacation. I am sure that the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury, who is present, could settle this question in a very short time; and I hope he will say that, as one of the public, he recognizes the hardship that has been described, and that he will make some inquiry in order to see whether steps cannot be taken to put a stop to it.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL (Sir Edward Clarke) (Plymouth): I did not at once rise to reply to the observations of the hon. Member for East Donegal (Mr. Arthur O'Connor), because many of the matters dealt with by him were, however important, of a kind with regard to which the Government cannot take any direct action. The hon. and learned Member for the Birr Division of King's County (Mr. Molloy) has said that all lawyers are tedious and expensive.

Mr. MOLLOY: I said that the law in England was tedious.

Sir EDWARD CLARKE: I admit there is delay in the administration of justice in both branches of the law; but I am not prepared to admit that the administration of the law in this country is slower or more tedious than in any other country of Europe. I know that the administration of the law in this country has changed of late years; it is less tedious, and, in some respects, less expensive, than it was before the year 1875. But with respect to the hearing of particular counsel, it is impossible for the Government to interfere. I quite agree with the hon. Member for East Donegal that there is a disadvantage connected with the system which has been adopted, not only in the Chancery Courts, but in the Common Law Courts, of allowing Queen's Counsel to have priority with regard to motions, when there is not sufficient time allowed for hearing all the motions. But that is a matter which must be left to the Judges. I am quite as ready as the most ardent reformer in this House to secure a speedy and less costly administration of the law; and with regard to another subject referred to by the hon. Member opposite, I think it a very great hardship that witness cases should be suspended from day to day, and I hope some plan will be devised to prevent this. But that, again, is a matter concerning the internal arrangement of the Courts. The hon. Member for East Donegal asks whether any action is to be taken on the Report made in 1885 as to the accumulation of arrears in the Court of Chancery, and the impossibility, as pointed out in that Report, of the present staff of Judges dealing with the current business and that which remains for adjudication. The most obvious comment made on that Report in several quarters has been that a new Judge should be appointed in the Chancery Division; and I, for one, agree in that proposal. I think it would be a great benefit to the public, and I am sure that an increase of judicial power does not always mean increased public burden. But the question of increasing the judicial staff is one which excites mingled feelings among Members of this House, and some opposition would probably be made to a proposal that a new Judge should be appointed in the Chancery Division. With regard to the Long Vacation, I do not desire to express any personal feeling on that subject, but I may say that it is a long time since I looked on the Vacation as representing anything like half a year; and when the hon. and learned Member for the Birr Division of King's County says that the Profession works for half of the year and amuses itself for the rest, this is, I think, an ideal view only to be explained by that same lack of professional experience with accounts of which the hon. and learned

Gentleman sometimes entertains the House.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: Will the hon. and learned Gentleman agree to the appointment of another Judge in the Court of Chancery?

Sir EDWARD CLARKE: I can only say that the subject has been under consideration. I cannot say what conclusion has been arrived at; but, undoubtedly, the pressure of the hon. Gentleman in this matter will have the effect of preventing the subject being lost sight of.

Mr. KIMBER (Wandsworth): I agree that the question of the arrangements of the Courts is one for which we cannot hold the Government responsible, and that it is scarcely the proper subject to occupy the time of the Committee; but there is another matter which we ought to consider, and that is the accessibility of the avenues to the Courts of Justice. I speak with an experience of 30 years, and I say that the avenues to the Courts of Justice are not as open to the public as they ought to be. Under the present system a man cannot approach the High Court of Justice in this country in any of its Divisions unless he does so in person or employs a counsel and solicitor. However insignificant the cause may be; however impecunious may be the client, he is bound to employ a solicitor and counsel. It is monstrous that the road to justice should be blocked in this way, and, as a member of the Legal Profession, I say that, so far from standing in the way of the clients in this respect, we should hail with pleasure any reform which would enable Her Majesty's subjects to get access to the High Courts of Justice. I ask the hon. and learned Gentleman the Solicitor General whether Her Majesty's Government will not take into consideration some plan such as has been suggested in former years for dealing with this question; and whether in the course of the Recess, and with a view to legislation in a future Session, they will not consider how far it is practicable to enable suitors to appear in the High Court of Justice either in person, or by barrister or solicitor without, as at present, being compelled to employ both, no matter at what expense? A solicitor even of 50 years' experience is not allowed to have audience of the Court. He can get audience if he employs a youth fresh from the University, who has just been called to the Bar, and while he is addressing the Court the solicitor must sit by and hear the result. I say that this question is one that ought to be looked at from the point of view of Her Majesty's suitors, and not from the point of view of what are the rights of solicitors and members of the Bar. Neither of them have any rights in such cases, as against the right of Her Majesty's suitors to be heard as quickly and as inexpensively as can be arranged.

Sir EDWARD CLARKE: I deprecate the Committee entering into a discussion on this subject, which involves one of the most difficult questions that can be discussed—namely, the relations of the two branches of the Profession. The hon. Member for Wandsworth (Mr. Kimber) admits that an individual may come before the Court in person; and therefore the only question is whether, in the event of his not doing this, the old practice should be continued of appearing by counsel and solicitor, or whether he should be able to go into Court with either counsel or solicitor only. The hon. Gentleman knows that this is a very difficult question. It would include a re-arrangement of the relations between the two branches of the Profession, because privileges could not be extended to one class without being extended to the other. I trust that the hon. Member, for these reasons, will not press the point on the present occasion.

Mr. HANBURY (Preston): I am convinced that in this matter the public do not care two pins for the two branches of the Profession; their object is to get cheap justice. It is all very well to say that the man can go into Court and argue his own case; but that is not what is wanted. I consider that there should be some arrangement by which the public could go into Court and get the cheap justice which is now denied them.

Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I am certain that we shall never get any justice in this matter while lawyers are allowed to say one word on the question. The hon. and learned Gentleman the Solicitor General (Sir Edward Clarke) has said that law in England is cheaper than in any other country; but I have had the privilege, which the hon. and learned Solicitor General has not had, of being sued not only in this country, but in America, in Germany, and in France, and I can say that in every one of the latter countries the law was better and more cheaply administered than it is in England. I repeat that as long as these arrangements are left to barristers and to Judges who have been barristers, it is not likely that they will ever accept partners in their own loot. We know that there are hundreds of minor causes in which solicitors could appear with advantage to their clients. Of course, in important cases the barrister would have to be engaged, and that is what is done in America; but for small cases it appears to me, setting aside the question between barristers and solicitors, which I will leave them to arrange between themselves, that it would be an immense advantage to the community if the proposal of the hon. Member for Wandsworth (Mr. Kimber) were carried out.

Mr. KIMBER: I do not think that we should find it impossible to make the arrangement which I advocate. We are an old country, and are supposed to have the best talent in the world for dealing with these subjects. Our Colonies are young, and have not the same experience as we have, and yet they have been able to do what I propose. They have passed a law which leaves the matter of representation in Court to the natural requirements of the case. It is left to the client to say whether he will have a barrister or a solicitor to represent him. I speak now for my Profession, and I say again that a client should be allowed to employ either a barrister or lawyer to represent him. I remember a case in which two counsel were employed; the senior counsel laid down a certain line on which the case should be conducted, the junior was of a different view; he got up and lost the case by proceeding on a line opposed to that of the senior counsel and the solicitor who was in Court.

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): My hon. Friend the Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) has inveighed against us as barristers and lawyers. I have the honour to be a member of the Profession; and with regard to the point taken up by the hon. Member for Wandsworth (Mr. Kimber), I say that the position of that hon. Member and myself in this matter, he belonging to one branch of the Profession and I to the other, ought to be sufficient to convince the hon. Member for Northampton that both barristers and lawyers can take an impartial view of a question of this kind. I rise now in order to state my emphatic opinion that the two branches of the Profession ought to stand in the same position. Of course, we know that the suggestion of the hon. Member for Wandsworth will not find favour with the hon. and learned Gentleman the Solicitor General; as long as the system of refreshers is in practice his view is one which Queen's Counsel will always take. But the result of the present practice is that law and justice are the privilege of the rich as against the poor; the poor man is prevented getting his rights, simply because, in contravention of the provisions of Magna Charta, he cannot have justice brought to his door. And against the present system, in common with my hon. Friends, I shall seize every opportunity of protesting until that system is altered. I wish to record my conviction that it is not always the best plan for a client to go to men at the top of the tree. They, as a rule, know nothing of the facts when they come into Court; they leave the work to be done by their devils, and I have known cases in which men at the top of the Profession have shown the most barefaced ignorance of the case they were engaged in.

Original Question put, and *agreed to.*

(3.) £8,680, to complete the sum for the Wreck Commission.

Mr. TUITE (Westmeath, N.): I wish to point out that many of the Wreck Commissioners Courts are composed of men who have no technical knowledge of the cases they have to decide; and Mr. Rothery has stated, with regard to the local Courts, that he is disposed to consider them "unsatisfactory and open to all the objections which have been urged against them." I do not think it can be denied that the manner in which the Courts are conducted is in many cases most objectionable, and it has occurred in some cases that the President has been an interested party—that is to say, connected with shipowning. I think that these matters should not be left to the local magistrates, but that competent naval officers should be sent to conduct the inquiries. With regard to the jurisdiction of the Courts, it is very objectionable that they have not more power over the owners of vessels than at present. I think, besides the fines they can now inflict, the Courts should have power to compensate the relatives of those who lose their lives by reason of the negligence, and I may say in some cases the premeditation, of shipowners —because it is well known that unseaworthy ships are sent to sea as a speculation by the owners, and when they go down there is no redress whatever. I think Mr. Rothery's recommendations on this subject are very valuable. He says—

> "So strongly do I feel on this point that I have lately declined to make any order condemning owners in costs, lest it should be used as an argument to relieve them from the consequences attaching to their conduct."

And he says—

> "No doubt, the law could preclude the owner from recovering anything if he sends his ship to sea in an unseaworthy condition."

The underwriters may be safely trusted to take care of themselves in these matters; but it is the poor seaman and the relatives of those drowned who deserve our sympathies, because they are men who, so to speak, are here to-day and gone to-morrow, and their chances of enforcing any claim against the owner of an unseaworthy ship is out of the question. Mr. Rothery recommends that the Court should have power to give compensation in the case of these unfortunate men. I have watched the evidence given before the Committee inquiring into the question of loss of life at sea with the greatest possible interest. The Report of that Committee has not yet come to hand; but I take this opportunity of asking whether the Government have any intention of bringing forward legislation at a future time for the purpose of affording redress to seamen who go to sea in unseaworthy ships, and whether they intend to give power to the Court to punish those who send ships to sea in an unseaworthy condition?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER) (Isle of Wight): With regard to the suggestion of the hon. Member for North Westmeath, that the magistrates who conduct these inquiries are interested parties, I should certainly be glad if he can give us cases in proof, because so far as we know there is no foundation whatever for the statement. The magistrate in these cases is stipendiary, and is assisted by assessors and officers of the Navy or Merchant Service, and he is there to deal only with the law and facts of the case, apart from the points on which he may be advised by those who assist him. It was enacted in the Act of 1876 that these Courts were not to have power to award compensation. They are not legal tribunals, in which the rights of parties can be determined; they are simply Courts held under Statute for the purpose of investigating the causes of the loss of life at sea. There is no doubt that shipowners who send their ships to sea in an unseaworthy condition are not only liable civilly, but also to be prosecuted criminally; and the hon. Member is probably aware that there have been several cases in which persons sending ships to sea in an unseaworthy condition have been prosecuted. I do not think it would be an improvement in the law to give the Wreck Commissioners Court powers to award compensation, because frequently the proper parties are not before them, and it would be necessary to enter upon an inquiry of very wide scope in order to ascertain the facts. On the whole, I am of opinion that it would not be satisfactory to give them the powers which the hon. Member suggests.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I observe that there is a special clerk kept for particular purposes in connection with the Court. Can the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) say if there is any work worth speaking of for that clerk to do; and is he aware how long he is employed on those duties?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): I cannot say that I know what amount of work has to be done by the clerk referred to; but the hon. Member for East Donegal will understand that he has to be referred to by Mr. Rothery from time to time.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that this particular gentleman has been for 61 years at this work?

MR. JACKSON: I am not aware of that; but, if so, I am glad that Mr. Rothery has the assistance of a man of such great experience.

Vote *agreed to.*

(4.) £350,789, to complete the sum for County Courts.

Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House (Mr. W. H. Smith) the other night alluded to a Bill dealing with County Courts, which the Government would not proceed with on account of the opposition that it was supposed I should offer to the Bill. The right hon. Gentleman was perfectly right in supposing that the Bill would meet with opposition from me. I should have opposed it on the ground which I now take this opportunity of stating to the Committee—namely, that there is no Department of our Public Administration which deserves more severe inquiry and more thorough reform than that of the County Courts. It would not, in my opinion, have been desirable to introduce a long Bill dealing with this question at a time which would not allow Members of this House an opportunity of suggesting reforms in connection with the County Courts, which are very much needed. I will not go into the question of those reforms at the present moment; but I desire to call the attention of the Committee and the Law Officers of the Crown to a subject that I brought before the Liberal Government when I was sitting below the Gangway opposite. At that time the Representative of the Government—the Solicitor General—admitted the grievance of which I complained, and also admitted that a remedy was necessary; but, notwithstanding that promise made four or five years ago, nothing up to the present time has been done. The Bill proposed to be introduced by the Government did not deal with this question, and by the Return issued the other day I see that the grievance was worse than before. This Establishment of the County Courts costs the country something like £500,000 a-year, and we have salaries in connection with it amounting to something like £100,000 a-year. I will give a few figures only taken from recent Returns. There are 59 County Court Circuits—that is to say, the Committee will understand that there are 59 Judges administering justice in the various County Courts. An hon. Member said something just now about 200 days being the average of work done by the Judges in the Superior Courts. That calculation is probably correct. If the House will pursue the calculation for a moment they will see that, after deducting 13 weeks for holidays from the 52 weeks of the year, there will remain 39 weeks or 234 working days during which the Superior Courts are engaged. Now, I do not think it is a very large demand upon gentlemen receiving such salaries as are received by the County Court Judges to ask that they should sit for the same number of days on which the Judges of the Superior Courts are occupied; and, according to the statistics, the Committee will see that the Judges of the Supreme Court sit for over 200 days in the year. But it appears by the Return for the year 1885 that of the 59 County Court Judges there are 25 who do not sit for 150 days in the year. Now, I put it to the Committee whether it is a right thing that out of these 59 Judges in receipt of salaries of £1,500 a-year, and in a country where there is great complaint with regard to the delay in the administration of justice, 25 of these Judges should only sit for the time I have mentioned? Then there is the Return for 1886, issued a week or two ago, from which I take the case of 12 County Court Judges, and which shows that one sat for 132 days, another 131, a third 127, and so on in the following gradation—128, 121, 113, 108, 105, 99, 85; and, finally, there was one Judge who actually only sat on 76 days. Now, I certainly think that this is a question that the Government of the day, whether Liberal or Conservative, ought to take up, and with regard to which they ought to institute a searching investigation for the purpose of introducing stringent reform. They should do one of two things—either reduce the number of Circuits, or call upon the Judges for some adequate return for the salaries they are paid. It is said that in addition to the number of days on which the Judges sit there are a certain number of days on which they travel. Of course, in 1857, when the County Courts were established, the facilities for travelling were by no means as great as they are now; but, notwithstanding the present facilities, I find it stated that one of the County Court Judges calculated that it would be cheaper to pay the amount in dispute in a small cause than to incur the expense of travelling, and accordingly he paid the plaintiff's claim. I know that the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) would not thank me if I were to detain the Committee at greater length on this question, important as it is; and, therefore, I will conclude by saying that I do not ask for any expression of opinion by a Division on the question of reducing the Vote; I simply ask that the Government will take this matter into their serious consideration, in order that there may be a thorough re-adjustment of the present system, and arrangements made by which the County Court Judges may perform an adequate amount of work in the important position in which they are placed.

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I am glad the right hon. Gentleman has raised this question, and placed the figures we have just listened to before the Committee. I have myself attempted to deal with this question, and have collected statistics with regard to it, which, however, I will not now state. I desire to draw the attention of the Committee to one point—namely, that the right hon. Gentleman would have made his case a great deal stronger if he had shown that 36 out of these 59 County Court Judges sit for less than 150 days. If you take 300 as the total number of working days in the year, it will be seen that 36 County Court Judges sat for less than one-half of the total number of working days, which is a very cogent reason in favour of a searching investigation and reform. There is an instance of the County Court at Liverpool sitting on 335 days, and that certainly does argue that those Judges who sit for 100 days, or less than 150, are shirking their duty. A great many of the County Court Judges go away for some time during the year, and leave the work of their Court to be performed by substitutes. Now, they will take any barrister that suits them to perform these important duties, and I know of many cases where what I may call serious miscarriages of justice have occurred simply because the County Court Judge has gone away and left some more or less incompetent person to take his place. There ought, therefore, to be some restriction placed upon the selection of persons who take the place of the County Court Judges where there is a large amount of work to be performed; but where there is a small amount of work I do not see that there is any reason for appointing substitutes at all. Again, I believe it would conduce greatly to the improvement of the calibre of the County Court Judges if they were regarded as eligible for promotion to the Higher Courts as junior Judges. In the case of the County Courts, which have most important duties to perform, and deal with causes where considerable sums are at stake, we want to have the best men that can be got to take the appointment of Judge. But, in many cases, those who take these appointments are not the best men; they are simply men who are worked out at the Bar, and have been pitchforked into these positions as a recompense for some service they have performed. If you were occasionally to select some of these men to fill the position of Puisne Judgeships in the High Court, I am certain you would offer an inducement to good men to take County Court Judgeships while they are in the prime of life, and have the power necessary to get through the amount of work that has to be done. I now wish to make some remarks with reference to the County Court Registrars. The Registrars in many of the County Courts, as all those who have the misfortune to come before them probably know, are very much more important personages than the Judges themselves, and are in the habit of brow-beating and bullying the counsel and witnesses who come before them. I mention this, not in order that their salaries may be reduced, but because it appears to me a scandal that if the Judges are supposed to be the supreme authorities in their own Courts, the Registrars should be allowed the amount of licence which, in some cases, they take upon themselves. A large amount of work is done by the Registrars of which the County Court Judges know nothing; and I say that, when you are talking about re-organization of the County Courts, it is the Registrars quite as much as the Judges who require to be looked after. Again, some of these Registrars are regular pluralists. I have received a letter, which unfortunately for the moment I have mislaid, complaining of a miscarriage of justice at Rye, in Sussex, that resulted from the Registrar of the County Court having monopolized every local office in the county. He is the clerk of this office and the clerk of that—a sort of octopus into whose clutches you are sure to fall. My contention is that if the Registrars have sufficient work to do they should not be allowed to monopolize offices outside their Courts; and that if, on the other hand, they have not sufficient to do, it is an argument in favour of re-organizing the County Court system. In connection with this subject, I wish also to bring before the hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General the case of a particular Registrar in the county of Cornwall. This case formed the subject of a Question put by me to the right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) some time ago, but to which, of course, I did not receive any satisfactory answer—I never do get a satisfactory answer from him in this House. I am sorry to trouble the Committee with the matter; but it is one of those abuses which it is always desirable to bring into the light of day, and you cannot get attention paid to the acts of officials in out-of-the-way districts unless the question is raised on occasions like this. The case I refer to is that of the High Bailiff of St. Columb Major, in the county of Cornwall, and I think we have a right to discuss his conduct on this Vote. A certain man was brought before the Bankruptcy Court; it was stated that this High Bailiff, in the performance of his duties as a public officer, had to levy an execution upon the goods of this bankrupt, and that he went to the man's shop, selected the best pair of shoes he could find there, and walked away without paying for them. It turns out that if it had not been for the statement made by the bankrupt before the Official Receiver the High Bailiff would not have paid for these boots at all. When the case came before the Lord Chief Justice at the Bodmin Assizes, he was very severe on the conduct of this High Bailiff—named Howard—and he is reported to have said—

> "That Mr. Howard did say something of the kind, and did go rather beyond the lines of an honest official, in spite of the evidence on that occasion as to his own character, must appear from what happened about the boots. It might be a small matter; but it was perfectly plain that Mr. Howard got the boots, and that if Ellis had not been examined in the Bankruptcy Court and Mr. Jenkins had not learned about them through the examination, the pair of boots would have been on Mr. Howard's feet at that moment, and would never have been paid for. It was perfectly plain that Mr. Jenkins found out this story about the boots, and he very properly went to Mr. Howard and said 'Pay me for those boots,' and the thing having come out, Mr. Howard, the High Bailiff, could not help paying for them. Whether that transaction redounded to his magnanimity his Lordship did not know; but one could not say that it redounded—Mr. Howard would excuse him for saying so—to his official honesty."

Now, I put it to the hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General whether we ought to allow important business to be transacted by men whose official honesty has been thus stigmatized by the Lord Chief Justice himself. I bring this case particularly before the Committee, because this man is not only High Bailiff, but postmaster at the office in St. Columb Major. He occupies a double position, and I say that a man whose official honesty has thus been stigmatized by the Lord Chief Justice of England has no business, without the most searching inquiry, to be allowed to retain these two important positions. The answer that the right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General gave me was that he had made inquiries. But these Departmental inquiries are worthless. All that the right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General did say was in the nature of a direct snub to the Lord Chief Justice for going beyond his function and condemning this individual whose official conduct was not in direct issue before the Court. I do not think that was very civil on the part of the right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General towards the Lord Chief Justice of England; but I am not here to teach the right hon. Gentleman manners. I am here to complain that a man charged with official breach of trust should be allowed to retain these two posts in the face of what has been said by the Lord Chief Justice, and I claim from the right hon. Gentleman that he should take some steps to satisfy himself whether this criticism of the Lord Chief Justice was deserved or not. If it was deserved, I say that the man ought to be treated in very much the same way as other officials whose conduct has been from time to time called in question. I shall probably have again to refer to this case in connection with another Vote, unless I get some more satisfactory information upon the subject now. You cannot expect the course of justice to be pure as long as you have officers behaving in this way, and I hope that the hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General will give the Committee an assurance that these abuses in connection with the County Courts will be looked into, so that justice may be done.

Mr. TOMLINSON (Preston): There is an objection to the scale of fees in County Courts which I hope will not be lost sight of. I understand that objection is taken to the hearing fees being fixed at 1*s.* in the pound on the amount claimed. Where the whole claim is in dispute that this might possibly be not an excessive charge; but considerable hardship is experienced where the whole sum claimed is not in dispute and where there is no defence to the action, but there may be difficulty in realizing the amount of the judgment. I hope that when the re-organization of the County Courts is under consideration the present scale of fees will not be lost sight of.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir Richard Webster) (Isle of Wight): It is, of course, impossible to overrate the importance of the subject which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) has brought before the notice of the Committee; and I may say at once that it is a case that Her Majesty's Government will carefully consider, not only with regard to the question of consolidation, but also to the question of the reform of the County Courts in the direction which the right hon. Gentleman has indicated. The question of the Judges' time is, no doubt, a difficult one; but I quite agree with the right hon. Gentleman that the way in which that time is occupied does require to be investigated. I am quite sure the right hon. Gentleman will not wish to do any injustice to the County Court Judges; but it is a matter which must be borne in mind that consolidation cannot be dealt with summarily, because it involves many considerations. I point out that even if consolidation were practicable in populous places it could not be carried out in places which are less populous. I quite admit that there is some ground for thinking that in some cases we do not get a sufficient economy of labour or a sufficient amount of judicial strength from the staff of County Court Judges. On the other hand, I think the right hon. Gentleman will say that we do get a very large amount of work out of our County Court Judges in populous places. I think there is possibly some mistake in the arithmetic of the hon. Member for the Camborne Division of Cornwall (Mr. Conybeare), because he has spoken of the Judge of the Liverpool County Court sitting on 335 days in the year. I do not see how that can be the case, unless the Court sat on Sundays—but probably there was more than one Judge engaged. Her Majesty's Government would wish to go quite as far as the hon. Gentleman in improving the County Court system—in economizing the time of the Judges, and in economizing the expenditure of the country which falls on the taxpayer to a certain small extent by reason of the way in which business is now transacted. As to the case of the deputies referred to by the hon. Member for the Camborne Division of Cornwall, I do not know whether he has had time to study the Consolidation Bill. He devotes his attention to so many subjects that perhaps he has not been able to master this matter as one should do who is desirous of dealing with it in a practical manner. If he had examined the Bill carefully he would have seen that it provides that the names of the deputies will be submitted to the Lord Chancellor. The Bill goes further than that, and I know it has given rise to some little remonstrance on the part of the County Court Judges, who think that in case of sudden emergency, where, for instance, they are taken with illness, they ought to be able to appoint a deputy for a week or so. I think I shall be prepared to meet that objection by some alteration in the Bill. I can, however, assure the hon. Member that the matter has not been lost sight of by the Lord Chancellor, and that it has been subsequently dealt with in the Bill. The hon. Member for the Camborne Division of Cornwall has spoken of the County Court Judges as being men worn out and pitchforked into their positions as required. Well, I have a very intimate knowledge of nearly all the County Court Judges who have been appointed during the past 10 or 15 years, and I think that with very few exceptions very little exception can be taken to those appointments. I do not think a member of our Profession ought to say—without being able to put his finger upon any appointment he refers to—that any one of these gentlemen ought to be described in the language which the hon. Member for the Camborne Division made use of. The only other matter the hon. Member refers to is that of a certain High Bailiff having obtained a pair of shoes, as it was alleged, under suspicious or improper circumstances. Well, whilst I perfectly agree that some questions of grievance should be considered in this House, I cannot admit that this House ought properly to be made a Court to consider whether or not a Bailiff stole a pair of shoes, or did wrong in possessing himself of them. If such a principle were admitted the House of Commons would be brought down to the level of the lowest Court in the land. If there really is a serious cause of complaint against the conduct of this High Bailiff, no doubt the Chief Justice would have brought the case to the attention of the County Court Judge or the Lord Chancellor. There may have been larceny committed, or there may have been improper conversion of the pair of shoes, and in one case the matter can be made the subject of an indictment, while in the other case those who have cause of complaint will be able to avail themselves of a civil remedy even in the County Court itself. I respectfully suggest to the hon. Gentleman that this is scarcely a matter for the House of Commons to deal with. It is certainly not a matter with regard to which I can give any pledge that the High Bailiff will be removed from his position. If the Lord Chief Justice, in summing up, considered him guilty of gross misconduct, no doubt some such representation will be made in the proper quarter and punishment will be meted out.

Mr. CONYBEARE: I know that that is a very trivial matter, and I was very reluctant to bring it forward; but having asked a Question of the hon. and learned Gentleman on one occasion with regard to this subject, and having asked a Question of the right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General with regard to the conduct of this functionary—as he is subject to both those Departments—and having failed to get a satisfactory answer, I thought myself justified in bringing the matter forward.

Sir RICHARD WEBSTER: The hon. Member is quite wrong in his recollection upon this subject. He certainly did not bring the conduct of this official under my notice.

Mr. CONYBEARE: Then I beg the hon. and learned Gentleman's pardon. I brought it under the notice of the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary.

Sir RICHARD WEBSTER: I say the proper remedy, whether the person who is alleged to have committed a fault is a Registrar or Bailiff or anyone else connected with the County Court, if he, in the course of his official duties, misbehaves himself and the circumstance is brought to the knowledge of any one of Her Majesty's Judges, the Judge would of course, if he thought the circumstances of the case called for it, communicate with the Lord Chancellor, or with whoever possessed authority over the individual. But I do not know that this subject is worthy of occupying so much time as has been expended upon it by the hon. Member. I trust he will understand that I do not wish in any way to complain of his exercising a certain amount of industry in connection with these matters; but I think it will be seen that this point is one which is hardly worthy of lengthened discussion. I hope I have answered the points raised by the hon. Member. As to the question of fees, I believe that the scale has been recently considered, and I rather think that some relief has been afforded in the direction pointed out by the hon. and learned Member for Preston (Mr. Tomlinson).

Mr. TOMLINSON: I do not think the point I referred to has been considered.

Sir RICHARD WEBSTER: I trust the Committee will now be allowed to take this Vote.

Vote *agreed to.*

(5.) £1,442, to complete the sum for Land Registry.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I do not think that this is a Vote which ought to be submitted to the Committee at all year after year as it is submitted to us. There is not sufficient work in the Registry Office to justify the employment of more than one-third of the existing clerks. Now, Sir, there has been laid upon the Table of the House in the present Session a Return of a number of estates placed on the register on the first registration. The number of estates placed on the register in the year 1886 was two. There have been other registrations in the Office on transfer or under wills, and there have been entries made in the Office by way of registration in connection with mortgages and charges; but taking every kind of entry which has been made on the register, whether first registration or any other description, the total number of dealings with estates with which this Office has been concerned during the past 12 months is 197. Now, in order to deal with those matters—scarcely one on every second day throughout the year—there is a staff consisting of a Vice Registrar at a salary of £1,500 a-year, a chief clerk at a salary of £400 a-year, two other clerks, one at £350 a-year and the other at £250 a-year, besides further assistants for copying. There used to be a Registrar, but that Office has been got rid of as an altogether ornamental sinecure. The Vice Registrar now does the work of the Registrar. The chief clerk is an experienced solicitor—he is perfectly competent to deal with all the matters with which the Office has concern. He is perfectly competent to investigate titles or any other business which it is necessary to have done in the Land Registry, and seeing that there is only one case registered every two days it is very difficult to see how work can be found for more than the man who is now chief clerk, and, say, one clerk to assist him; while under these circumstances it is not reasonable and right that the Government should come and ask for £2,930 this year for salaries. The amount of work done in the Office may be gauged by the fact that whereas in other offices connected with legal business the fees very much exceed the amount of the salaries, in this Office, while the salaries amount to £2,900, the fees come to only £800 in the year. The whole thing is a hopeless failure. It was started by a very clever Lord Chancellor in the year 1862, who managed to put some of his own relatives into the posts he created, and the history of the whole office is a story of jobbery. The whole staff consists of men who, unlike the rest of persons in the Civil Service, have never passed a Civil Service examination at all. The only person mentioned in connection with this Department as having passed a Civil Service examination is not either the Vice Registrar, or the chief clerk, or the second clerk, or the third clerk, but the housekeeper. You require a Civil Service examination to be passed by the housekeeper, whilst all the rest of the officials are admitted without. And why? Because it was a matter of patronage. But it remains a job to this day, and though we might be disposed to allow a sum of £800 to be taken for salaries, which would be abundantly sufficient for the purpose, seeing that the fees amount to £800, it certainly does appear to me that this Vote is at least £2,100 in excess of what it ought to be. I make no doubt that the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury would be very willing to reduce the Vote if he could; but he is met with the difficulty that always arises in these cases—namely, "You cannot get rid of these people because they have vested interests." The same bogey of vested interests which causes the public to be plundered in so many Departments of the Administration is here in full force. But why should you continue to pay these men salaries which it is not necessary to pay them, simply because through not having passed Civil Service examinations you will have some difficulty in transferring them to other places? I would submit that it is for the interest of the Treasury, in the interests of economy, and in discharge of their plain office and function, to see whether they cannot transfer some of those men to certain other Departments of the State where their services may be utilized, or, if they cannot do that, then to get rid of those people and pension them. There is no real justification for continuing to pay salaries to men whom you have to admit you cannot properly employ.

Mr. NOLAN (Louth, N.): I only differ from my hon. Friend the Member for East Donegal (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) in this, he is of opinion that some salaries ought to be retained, whilst I think that they ought to be abolished altogether. I have taken the trouble to glance over the history of this office, and I find that it was first established in the year 1862, and that from that time up to within five or six years ago it seems to have existed without attracting very much attention in Committee in this House. [Sir George Balfour: There was notice taken of it.] The hon. and gallant

Member says that there was some notice taken of it by the Committee of this House. Well, very little notice was taken of it, at any rate by the Treasury. Hon. Members by referring to *Hansard* in 1885 will see that Mr. Arthur Arnold —the then Member for Salford—said—

> "Within the past two half-years the number of new estates registered in this Office had been six—two in one half and four in the other."—(3 *Hansard*, [299] 745.)

No notice seems to have been taken of this statement made by Mr. Arthur Arnold, although I find that some very strong language was used by this Gentleman in speaking about the Office. The office of Registrar became vacant on the 23rd January, 1886, and then it was found that the duties which he was supposed to have discharged during his 25 years of office could be discharged by the Vice Registrar, and that, translated into English, meant that the heavily burdened taxpayers of this country paid to the late Registrar the sum of £60,000 for practically doing nothing at all. Well, in February, 1886, I find that the late Attorney General — Sir Charles Russell—in speaking of this Registry Office, said—

> "I speak the opinion of the Profession, when I say that from beginning to end these two Acts"—

that is to say, the Act of 1862 and the Act of 1875—

> "were signal failures . . . . that they have done little better than to establish one or two not unimportant sinecures."—(3 *Hansard*, [302] 1004.)

And Mr. T. H. Bolton—the then Member for North St. Pancras—said—

> "I venture to say, as a man having some little knowledge of this Land Registry Office, that if there is one complete failure in connection with legal reform it is in connection with this Office."—(*Ibid.* 1005.)

In view of these facts, I am exceedingly surprised to find that no attempt has been made to effect anything in the shape of reform. I find that it is the opinion of legal gentlemen, well acquainted with the administration of affairs in connection with this and other offices, that without any inconvenience whatever to the public the work which is done by the Land Registry Office might be done fairly well in the Public Record Office at, perhaps, slightly additional cost to that Office; and owing to these circumstances, I shall, if no explanation be given, feel it my duty, in the interests of the taxpayers, to move the reduction of this Vote by the total amount.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER) (Isle of Wight): I hope the hon. Gentleman the Member for East Donegal (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) will not think it necessary to oppose this Vote, and will not bring the question he has raised to a Division. I sympathize to a great extent with everything which the hon. Member for North Louth (Mr. Nolan) has said. I have never in this House or anywhere else defended the Land Registry in regard to the manner in which it was originally established, or in regard to the manner in which it has been carried on. I would wish to say one word in justification of the action of the present Government in the matter. The Committee will, no doubt, remember that the Office of Registrar fell vacant during the first time Lord Salisbury was in Office in 1886, and at once Her Majesty's Government determined that they would not renew the office, and brought in a Bill and passed it through the House, saving the country £2,500 or £1,500 a-year—I think £2,500. I mention that fact not as having been done by one Government or the other, but as showing that Her Majesty's present Government are fully alive to the desirability of putting a stop to this office. When the hon. Gentleman opposite suggested the transfer of the work of this office to the Public Record Office, the hon. Gentleman loses sight of the real condition of the matter, because there are on the Register about 3,000 titles at the present time, and about as many mortgages and charges. There were in the year 1886, I believe, 700 cases in which reference had to be made to different titles. With regard to the fees the hon. Member refers to, £815 is undoubtedly a very small amount; but he will probably remember that in consequence of the way in which the work of this office has hung fire, the fees have been put very low for the purpose of attracting work to it. It is doubtful whether it would be wise to transfer work of this nature from the hands of those who are thoroughly familiar with it, having been engaged upon it for some years, and having necessarily acquired knowledge enabling them to deal with such matters to another department. But there is another reason why no reduction should be made. The Committee is aware that the whole subject is going to be dealt with in a kindred Bill—namely, the Land Transfer Bill of the Lord Chancellor; and if that Bill passes, which I hope it will, there will be necessity for the appointment of an increased staff. It certainly would not be wise to get rid of this small office for a year or two, when the knowledge and experience it has acquired in the present Land Registry Office would be so useful and valuable in connection with the proposed new Registry. I mention these two points together as showing that the Government are desirous of dealing with the matter. They do not wish to lose the services of men who have experience in the matter of Land Registry, and who will be useful when we come to deal with an enlarged scheme. I agree that in this matter the country has not had value for its money, and I trust that having regard to the reduction which has been made in the office in the past, and the almost immediate prospect of the services of the officials in the office being rendered useful in the future, that hon. Members will be satisfied this evening by drawing the attention of the Committee to this subject, and will not think it necessary to oppose the Vote.

Mr. NOLAN: With reference to the observations of the hon. and learned Gentleman just now that the fees were put to a low figure for the purpose of attracting business, I should like to ask him whether he has noticed the case quoted by the late Member for North St. Pancras—Mr. T. H. Bolton—on March 1st, 1886, when he stated that he knew of some land being purchased, the total value of which was £2,900, on which the cost of completing the purchase was £56, and on which the registration fees—that is to say, the fees charged by the Land Registry Office, amounted to £104 12*s.* 7*d.*, making the total cost of transferring £2,900 worth of property £180 12*s.* 7*d.* If some change has been made in the scale of fees charged by the Land Registry Office since then, of course the Land Registry Office ought to get the benefit of it in the estimation of the public; but I think that so long as they charge such large fees as those the country has a right to demand the abolition of the Office altogether.

Sir RICHARD WEBSTER: With reference to the case the hon. Member refers to, I do not remember now the exact circumstances; but I recollect having my attention drawn to it last year by the hon. Gentleman whose name has been mentioned. I think, if I remember rightly, the individual fees were small, but that the question of title was such that a great many official documents had to pass through the Registry. In that way, probably, the large amount of expenditure may be accounted for. I quite agree that, where the fees amount to over £100 in the case of the registration of a piece of property, the sum is much too high. If the hon. Member wishes it, I will go through the matter again; but I rather think that some such explanation as that which I now offer is to be given to account for the high fees referred to.

Vote *agreed to.*

(6.) £20,370, to complete the sum for Revising Barristers, England.

(7.) £8,689, to complete the sum for Police Courts, London and Sheerness.

Mr. FLYNN (Cork, N.): I do not intend to detain the Committee very long upon this Vote. I simply rise for the purpose of asking the question—of asking whether the Government will take into consideration now, or, if possible, in the future, some scheme by which the cost of the Police Courts in Sheerness shall be defrayed by the locality in which these Courts are situated, and not out of the Consolidated Fund or by Vote in this House? In Cork, Sir, and in Belfast, and all the principal cities in Ireland, and in England also, the expenses of all these Police Courts are defrayed entirely out of the fines and other sources of revenue of the Courts themselves. If those sources of income are not sufficient the expenses are defrayed out of the local rates. I think it is time that the attention of the Committee were called to this matter. I may be met by the statement that this question I am now raising is not a very big one, and that it will be dealt with under the Local Government scheme which is about to be brought forward. That may be very true. This matter may be dealt with when the reform of the Local Government of London is taken in hand; but, at the same time, I must remark that it ought not to be difficult to frame some scheme by which the fines and charges raised in the Police Courts of London might be applied to defraying their own expenses. More particularly in regard to the Police Court in Sheerness, I wish to call the attention of the Committee to the figures, which show a very anomalous condition of things. They show that the clerk of the Police Court at Sheerness receives a salary of £300 a-year; that he also receives a commission of 5 per cent as Treasurer to the County of Kent, and High Bailiff; and that he also receives a salary as Registrar of the County Court. In addition to all this he is clerk to the Chatham and Dover Board. The point I wish to bring before the Committee will seem very clear to hon. Members when I point out that this clerk to the Police Court at Sheerness is clerk to the Sheerness County Court, and receives a salary in that capacity. I should like to have some explanation as to what claim Sheerness has to an exceptional position in this matter as compared with other portions of the Kingdom. In Ireland we have a Vote for the County Courts; but, so far as the local Police Courts go, they are entirely managed out of the local rates by fines and stamps and other charges, consisting of summonses, and so on. I should like to ask for some explanation on this point.

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Stuart-Wortley) (Sheffield, Hallam): The hon. Member has very correctly said that the question of the incidence of the charge for the Metropolitan Police Courts is a part of another and a much larger question. There is involved in it the question of the delimitation and determination of the rating area. Perhaps he is aware that the area of the Metropolitan Police is not co-extensive with the area of the Metropolitan Police Courts, nor is that area co-extensive with that of the Metropolis Management Act, under which the Metropolitan Board of Works acts. It is obvious that any reconsideration of this subject might form part of the general scheme of Metropolitan Government with regard to which, no doubt, the Government have pledged themselves to take action at some future time; but it is not, perhaps, for me to express an opinion as to whether, or to what extent, the charge for police should become a local charge. No doubt it becomes a very difficult matter to decide, when you take into consideration the extent and quality of the accommodation afforded to the population of the Metropolis; and it becomes difficult to decide whether too much or too little accommodation exists, owing to the absence of the usual check that is provided where the ratepayers have to provide the accommodation themselves. In the light of that fact this question must be considered. As to the particular official at Sheerness who receives these additional allowances, no doubt the facts are as the hon. Member has stated; but the whole arrangements in connection with the Sheerness Police Court are similar to those in connection with the county tribunals. The hon. Member will see this if he compares the duties of the clerk of the Police Court with those to be discharged in connection with the county tribunals. His position and his duties are the same; the Government has no claim on his whole time; and he may hold other local offices in addition to his appointment.

Vote *agreed to.*

(8.) Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum, not exceeding £275,620, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1888, for contribution towards the Expenses of the Metropolitan Police, and of the Horse Patrol and Thames Police, and for the Salaries of the Commissioner, Assistant Commissioners, and Receiver."

Mr. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): In rising to move that the Vote be reduced by the sum of £1,500, the salary of the Chief Commissioner of Police, I have to regret that it should be necessary to bring the question of the London police at all before the notice of this Committee, because it is really not an Imperial question, but a local or a municipal question. If London had a municipality, as the other large towns of the country have, and if the police of London were under the control of a Watch Committee as they are in Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, and other provincial towns, the course I propose to take would not only be unnecessary, but would be altogether unjustifiable.

But, Sir, there is a complete difference between the position of the London ratepayers with regard to the police and the position of the ratepayers of other towns—a difference which, perhaps, I may best illustrate by a recent incident. In other large towns of the country the police, as I have said, are under the control of the Watch Committee; and in the majority of cases, as I am informed, the police are directed by the Watch Committee to look after disorderly houses, and of course they are bound to carry out the instructions of their masters. Well, Sir, for 20 years—at least, so we were informed the other day—the Metropolitan Police have also discharged this duty of watching disorderly houses, and I believe they have performed that duty very much to the satisfaction of the Local Authorities. But what do we find? Why we find that by a recent order—by a stroke of the pen—Sir Charles Warren has forbidden the police to continue this duty, and it is notorious that the Local Authorities of the Metropolis are justly indignant. One Local Authority has already interviewed the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary on the subject, and another Local Authority, in my own neighbourhood, is about to do so. I adduce this case simply as an illustration to show the position in which the London ratepayers are; to show that this Committee and this House constitute the only Court of Appeal which we have on police matters against Scotland Yard and the Home Office, and therefore I hope that I shall receive a patient and even a favourable hearing from hon. Members who represent country towns, if there are any now in this very thin House whilst I make a statement which, with every desire and every effort to compress, will, I am afraid, be a little long. I should like to say that my interest in this subject did not commence with a recent notorious case. Long before the arrest of Miss Cass, which has aroused public attention to the conduct of the police, I had determined to draw attention to the subject in this Committee. I am glad, however, that recent events have, to a considerable extent, stirred up the mind of the public upon the question. I saw, Sir, in a newspaper of last Saturday an article which is based on a statement that "a dead set is being made against the Metropolitan Police." Now, so far as I can make out, the only basis of fact upon which that statement rests is that during the last few weeks we have unfortunately had a very large number of cases brought before the public in the Police Courts in this Metropolis in which it has been demonstrated that police constables have given false evidence. But, Sir, if the use of the expression "dead set" is applicable at all, it is obvious that it is the police who are themselves making a dead set upon the public. However, if there is any disposition in any quarter to make a "dead set" upon the Metropolitan Police or to bear unfairly upon them, for my own part I wish to separate myself entirely from that course of proceeding, and to condemn it most emphatically. I shall have reason presently to say something unpleasant about the police; but in the first place I desire, in the warmest and most grateful manner, to bear my testimony to the highly excellent qualities which the Metropolitan Police possess. Their good humour and civility are proverbial. It is recognized by us who are natives, and it is remarked upon by Americans and Continentals who visit us; and I should also like to say a special word in recognition of the courage of the Metropolitan Police. We have quite recently had many signal examples of courage on the part of the police—courage often displayed in very unequal, and I think I might say very cruel contests—unequal contests between the baton of the policeman and the revolver of the burglar. And I say that those instances of which we have had many do honour to the men, and reflect credit upon the Force to which they belong. Now, I have studied this question from two sides. In the first place, with regard to the grievances of the Force itself, the police have many grievances, and I have received many communications from them; and so far is it from the truth that I am making or am regarded by them as making a "dead set" upon them, I believe they look upon me as their very best friend; and with regard to the grievances to which I have alluded, I shall certainly spare no effort, as far as my humble influence extends, to get them removed. The second aspect of this question is that which concerns relations between the police and the public, which in one aspect to which I wish as briefly as possible to refer is not satisfactory. There is one general charge brought against the Metropolitan Police, and I am afraid it is well founded, and it is this—that they do not strictly regard the obligations of truth when a little hard swearing, or, for the matter of that, a good deal of hard swearing is necessary in order to corroborate or to protect a fellow-constable; or, as they perhaps would prefer to put it, "to maintain the credit of the Force." Now I have noticed a very significant difference in the attitude of the police themselves towards this charge which they call proper loyalty to the Force, and the charge of black-mailing of which we have heard a good deal in this House lately. If in conversation you bring a general charge of black-mailing against the police and a police constable happens to be present, he will indignantly deny the charge; but if in a company in which a police constable happens to be present you substantially bring the charge which I am now putting before the Committee against the Force, it is true that a police constable may endeavour to qualify the charge, but he will not directly and indignantly deny it. And I think that the reason is not very far to seek, because this characteristic, mischievous as it is, has what we might almost call a generous basis. It originates, no doubt, in *esprit de corps*. But, encouraged and supported as I shall show it is by the system which has prevailed in Scotland Yard and which still prevails there, this has grown into a monstrous vice which must be ruthlessly excised, or the liberties of the people of London, and especially of the poorer and humbler classes in this City in whom, from my position, I am more particularly interested—I say that the liberties of the poorer and humbler classes will every day be jeopardized. Then with this exception —for which I blame not so much the men themselves as the system which has prevailed at headquarters — with this exception, I think the police conduct themselves in every respect most admirably. For this exception, I say, I blame not the men, but the system, and the staff at headquarters. Now, of course, for the system Sir Charles Warren must be held to be responsible. He has now been in office some 18 months; he has got, I think I may say, fairly into the saddle; and it is but reasonable to move to reduce his salary as a mode of protesting against this system. But, Sir, in the second place, I shall allude to some administrative acts for which Sir Charles Warren is more directly and immediately responsible. I cannot forget that it is not so long ago when an unfortunate mistake having been made Lieutenant Colonel Henderson received a very short shrift, and if the expectations which we all—and I not the least—had formed of Sir Charles Warren have been disappointed, I really cannot see why we should extend to him a more merciful consideration than was extended to the gallant gentleman who preceded him. Now, Sir, my difficulty has been to compress the vast body of material which has come into my hands into a reasonable compass. I shall not put before the Committee tonight a single piece of tittle-tattle or hearsay evidence. Every statement which I shall make shall rest either on sworn testimony or upon the admissions of Scotland Yard itself. Now I think one of the most typical cases which could possibly be brought forward to illustrate the system of Scotland Yard is the case of Miss Parton, of which the House has already heard something; and I adduce the case of Miss Parton, and I propose to go into it at some little length, because to my mind it shows most distinctly that the settled policy of Scotland Yard is to fob off the complaints which the public make against the police, however serious and however well-founded those complaints may be. I hold in my hand two statutory declarations, one by Miss Parton, who was assaulted by the police, and the other by her sister, who accompanied her on the occasion of the assault. These statutory declarations have been prepared at the instance of the Society for the Protection of Women and Children. Mr. Bridge thought proper to condemn the interference of the Society for the Protection of Women and Children. [Mr. MATTHEWS dissented.] I see the right hon. Gentleman opposite the Home Secretary shakes his head; but I think I am better versed in the facts of this case than he is, and I do most distinctly assert that Mr. Bridge said that this was not a case which the Society for the Protection of Women and Children ought to have taken up.

Now, from the first statutory declaration I will only read a few lines at present. Miss Rosa Maud Parton, of 58, George's Road, Holloway, said—

> "On Thursday, the 16th day of June, 1887, I was at Clerkenwell Police Court as witness in a case of wilful damage. That I was outside the Court in the lobby against the warrant officer's door, and when the case was called on, was about entering the Court, when Police Constable Butler, 'G' Division, who was letting me into the Court, lifted up his fist and gave me three blows across the chest, saying—'Get out of my way; I did not call you.' The constable gave me three distinct blows in quick succession. That I nearly fainted in consequence of the violence of the blows, which made a bruise upon my chest, and which broke the pearls in a gold locket that I was wearing."

As to the nature of the blow, there is the clearest evidence that was ever given in any Court of Law in evidence which is not traversed. There is the sworn evidence of the medical gentleman from Holloway, who said he had examined Miss Parton, and found on her breast a large bruise; that her breast was badly swollen, and that a push would not have produced what he saw; but that she must have received a blow. So much, then, for the character of the blow. As I say, that evidence of the medical man was not traversed in any way by the defence. Well, Sir, this occurred on the 16th of June. On the 20th June Miss Parton made a formal complaint to the Chief Commissioner of Police in a letter reciting the facts which I have laid before the Committee. Well, on the 1st of July the following reply was received from the Chief Commissioner. He states that—

> "He has investigated the matter, and, acting in accordance with the instructions of the Secretary of State, has to inform you that your proper course is to prefer a charge before a magistrate, the Superintendent of the Division will then arrange for the attendance of the constable complained of to answer for his conduct on the occasion in question."

Now, both the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary—whom I am glad to see opposite—and the Chief Commissioner must have known perfectly well that the application for a summons for this assault in the Clerkenwell Police Court would, in the ordinary course, have to be made before one of the magistrates who usually attend the Clerkenwell Police Court. It is clearly, therefore, relevant now to the issue to put before the Committee the statement of facts as to the treatment which Miss Parton had already received at the Clerkenwell Police Court, and for that purpose I will read from the statutory declaration of Miss Parton's sister. After referring to what had brought her there, Serena Parton said—

> "About 3.30, the Constable Butler in charge of the Court, called—'Parton and Smith.' We went forward for the purpose of entering the Court, when Butler struck my sister three violent blows on the chest, saying—'I did not call you: get out of my way.' He afterwards beckoned to someone else, took them into the Court, and shut the door. Another constable then went into the Court another way, and came and opened the door, which had been shut, and asked us to come in, which we did. When the case which was being heard was ended, I went up to the magistrate and said—'Will your Worship kindly hear my case now, as I could not get into Court before.' He said—'Why were you not here when your name was called? I heard it called myself.' I said—'Your Worship, I was not allowed to enter the Court when my name was called.' He said—'Oh, stuff and nonsense!' I then said—'The constable in charge of the door called us, and then would not allow us to enter, and he has assaulted my sister—he hit her three times in the chest, and has hurt her very much—she is here, and will tell you.' He said—'The constable assaulted her! Don't tell me a parcel of lies; I don't believe a word you say; you were all in the pothouse over the way drinking.' I said—'We have not left the waiting room of the Court, and there is the constable (our witness) who is with us; you can ask him. He saw the officer assault my sister.' Mr. Barstow then said—'Don't tell me lies.'"

I may say that on the hearing, when the assault was committed, the Misses Parton went over to a solicitor who practises in the Clerkenwell Police Court, and desired him to take out a summons against Police Constable Butler. That solicitor, whose name I shall be prepared to give to the Committee, if the Committee desires to have it, distinctly declined to take up the case because he said it was no use going against the police before the magistrates of that Court. Well, Sir, at this stage of the case, some of her friends advised Miss Parton to submit the facts of the statement I have already given to the Society for the Protection of Women and Children. She did so, and that Society took up the case at once, and with regard to their action in the matter I venture to differ from the opinion which was formed of the matter by Mr. Bridge. I venture to think that the Society in question is a useful Society, and I venture to think that it never did a day's work which better or more properly deserved the gratitude of the public than when it took up and has been the means of introducing to the notice of the House this scandalous assault on Miss Parton. On the 7th July the Society's solicitors, Messrs. Alsop and Co., wrote to the Chief Commissioner of Police. After some formal matter, which I need not read, they say—

> "We have also to ask that the Home Secretary's permission be obtained for the summons being heard at Bow Street, and not at the Clerkenwell Police Court, where Butler is employed as warrant officer, because, for various reasons, which need not now be stated, it is felt that the complainant would be very much hampered, and that there would not be so impartial an investigation as at a Court where they have no connection with Butler. We may mention that this is the rule in all County Court proceedings against any of its officers; they are always transferred to another Court to be heard and disposed of."

That was an application to the Chief Commissioner to procure a transfer of the summons. Well, the Chief Commissioner replied to that on the 11th July, as follows:—

> "As regards the transfer of the case to Bow Street Police Court, the Commissioner has to advise that your application for this purpose should be made to the magistrate concerned, as it is not a matter with which the Commissioner can deal."

[*Cries of* "Hear, hear!"] The hon. Member (Mr. Stuart-Wortley) says "Hear, hear!" I rather think he was not in the House when I commenced my statement; but certainly I am rather surprised, knowing the candid mind which he usually displays, that he should say "Hear, hear" to a letter of this kind, which requested Miss Parton to make her application to Mr. Barstow, by whom she had been grossly insulted. In respect of this letter, a fresh application was made for the transfer this time to the Home Secretary, in the following terms—and I will read a portion of the letter addressed by Messrs. Alsop and Co. to the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary:—

> "Inasmuch as the defendant is what is termed 'a servant of the magistrates' at the Clerkenwell Police Court, we have to ask that we may be at liberty to take out the summons at the Chief Police Court—namely, Bow Street, where the defendant is unknown, and where the utmost impartiality can be relied on. We may mention that in all cases in the County Courts, where any of the officers are complained of, the proceedings can be taken in an adjoining Court, the object being to prevent any influence being at work to in any way affect the decision to be given; and inasmuch as the magistrates at the Police Courts have jurisdiction over the whole Metropolis, we respectfully submit that there is a good and valid reason why the matter should be proceeded with at Bow Street. We may, perhaps, be pardoned, observing that the complainant applied to a local solicitor to ask the magistrate at Clerkenwell to grant a summons against the warrant officer; and the local solicitor replied it would be of no use, and a waste of time, as the defendant was an officer of the Court, and the magistrate would decide in his favour; and as there should not be even a suspicion that justice is not quite pure, we humbly submit that our application should be acceded to."

Well, in reply to that letter the application was granted, the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary, on the 15th July, writing—

> "On a personal application being made by the complainant to-morrow to the sitting magistrate at Bow Street, a summons against this officer will be granted."

Well, a summons was granted by Mr. Bridge, and before him, without Miss Parton's consent, the summons was withdrawn. Thus we see that there had been a very great expenditure, both of time and money, on the part of Miss Parton and those who had interested themselves on her behalf, and that no redress whatever had been obtained. Police Constable Butler, who had assaulted Miss Parton, was left in the discharge of his very important and very responsible duties at the Clerkenwell Police Court; and, as I say, under pressure from the magistrate, the charge was ultimately withdrawn. I cannot help, at this point, contrasting the result in this case, where a policeman had assaulted a member of the public, with some other cases which have recently attracted the attention of the public, in which members of the public have been charged with assaults upon the police. I cannot help contrasting the withdrawal of the charge against Police Constable Butler, and his escaping, so far, absolutely scot free, with the sentence of six months' imprisonment passed on Mr. Williams, and the sentence of two months' imprisonment, which, in spite of all representations——

THE CHAIRMAN: I must point out that the hon. Gentleman is diverging at great length, right and left. He must confine his attention to the conduct of the police and of the Chief Commissioner of Police. He is now entering into the conduct of certain magistrates.

MR. PICKERSGILL: I apologize for the inadvertence; but I think it has only been during the last two or three minutes. I have been endeavouring to keep as closely as possible to the conduct of the police, though it is true the conduct of the magistrates is, to a certain extent, inevitably mixed up with it. At this point of the case, I was asked to bring the matter before the notice of the House of Commons. I investigated all the facts, and I consented to do so. I put a Question to the Home Secretary, and the Home Secretary made a reply, which I have here, but which I do not think I need read. On the following day, however, I received a letter from Messrs. Alsop and Co., the solicitors of the Society, who took up this case, and from which I would like to read a few words. The Committee will bear in mind that Messrs. Alsop and Co. are amongst the most respectable firms of solicitors in this City. This is the letter they sent to me on the following morning, and it should be remarked that I had not previously had any communication with them whatever—

> "Referring to your Question in the House last night, the Home Secretary's answer in many respects is inaccurate. She did give in evidence that she nearly fainted from the police constable's violence, and had to be helped to a seat, and a glass of cold water fetched to her. The charge was not withdrawn by the complainant in consideration of the constable's good character. In our opinion the assault would never have occurred but for the conduct of the magistrate which is so well known at that Court, as is borne out by the admission of what he did say to these respectable young women when they came into Court—namely, that they had been (stating it as a fact, but of which he knew nothing) over at the pot-house drinking."

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! I have not heard a word in that letter bearing upon the point before the Committee.

MR. PICKERSGILL: The first part of the letter referred to the answer given by the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary in this House; but I will not pursue that subject further in compliance with your intimation. After I had put my Question to the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary, I suggested that in order to protect the public it would be only reasonable and proper that Police Constable Butler should be removed from his position as warrant officer to the Clerkenwell Police Court. The right hon. Gentleman at first certainly did not share my view of the matter. He said, on the 29th July—

> "The usual practice is that a warrant officer is not withdrawn from the Police Court unless a complaint has been made by the magistrates, and no such complaint has been made in this case."

Well, Sir, it will be obvious to the Committee, after the statement of facts which I have put before them, that no complaint was likely to be received from the magistrates. However, I think I may be permitted to say that I pressed the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary on the matter, and in the end he did what I suggested, removed Police Constable Butler from the Clerkenwell Police Court, and I may say here that Miss Parton is not influenced by any kind of vindictive feeling against this man, and that, in my case, no such idea can be imputed to me, because I never saw the man in my life. I have been actuated throughout this matter solely with regard to the public interest, and I am perfectly satisfied that so far as Police Constable Butler is concerned the matter might rest. But I have put this case, and I regret the length at which I have been obliged to state it; but I hope I shall have the patient consideration of the House, having regard to the somewhat difficult circumstances in which I stand. I say I have put this case at some length before the Committee, because it illustrates to my mind the system which prevails at Scotland Yard. It is impossible at Scotland Yard to get the complaints of the public attended to on their merits. The only way to get notice from the Commissioners is to squeeze these men by bringing the matter before the House, and by threat of a hostile Motion. Well, Sir, exactly the same policy of fobbing off was shown in the notorious case of Miss Cass. The right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary is in very bad odour in the country at this moment in consequence of that case. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] It is useless for hon. Members opposite to say "No, no!" because the fact is notorious; but, as a matter of fact, I was going to say a word in favour of the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary. I think that in the early stages of this case, at all events, the right hon. Gentleman was not so much to blame, because he gave the answers which were put into his mouth by Scotland Yard. And I say that in those answers we notice exactly the same policy of fobbing-off complaints, if possible, which was still more conspicuously shown in the Parton case. Now, Sir, how is business conducted at Scotland Yard? I think we may derive from the case of Miss Cass an illustration of the mode in which business is conducted there in respect of cases which have not attracted very much attention. We know, because the facts have been detailed in this House, that on the 30th June, which was a Wednesday, a letter written on behalf of Miss Cass, containing that young lady's complaint, was posted to the Chief Commissioner, on the 2nd July the receipt of that letter was acknowledged by the Chief Clerk, and yet on the 5th July—that is, on the following Tuesday, very nearly a-week after the complaint had been despatched, and within a few hours of the disastrous Division on which the Government and the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary were defeated—the right hon. Gentleman said that no complaint had been received by him on behalf of Miss Cass. Well, Sir, what explanation was given of that extraordinary inaccuracy? An explanation was given in a letter written by order of the Chief Commissioner on the 6th July to Madame Bowman, and it was to the effect that the communication which had been received had been forwarded to the Chief Constable in the district in the usual course for inquiry, and who would report as to the circumstances of the case, for the information of the Chief Commissioner. Now, that was on Tuesday afternoon, so that it appears that at the very time when the right hon. Gentleman was telling us in this House that no complaint had been received, the complaint was actually at headquarters in Scotland Yard. Well, Sir, on the Saturday, and more on the Monday, and even still more I must say on the Tuesday, the London newspapers were ablaze with this question; and yet the Chief Constable of the district referred to, the gentleman to whom we are paying a salary of £1,000 a-year, and from whom we naturally expect the exercise of great discretion, although, as I say, public feeling was going against the Government with regard to this matter, yet this Chief Constable, who had this complaint in his possession, appears never to have taken any special steps to bring it under the notice either of the Chief Commissioner or of the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary. I am curious, Sir, to know the name of that most intelligent officer, and I hope presently, when the right hon. Gentleman replies, that he will tell us to whom we are indebted for such a signal example of official discretion. Now, I want to say a word or two about the evidence given by the police, which I mentioned at the beginning of these remarks. At the inquiry which was conducted before Sir Charles Warren we had some curious specimens of police witnesses. Of course it may be said that upon that occasion the man who was incompetent acted very recklessly; but my point is this—whether, in regard to the witnesses which were produced, he was simply imitating the example which had been set him by his superiors. I am very doubtful whether, if the public mind had not been concentrated upon that case, and if the light of public criticism had not been beating upon it very fiercely, James Wheatley and Madame Pietra would not have passed muster in the witness-box. I am very doubtful, indeed, whether J. Wheatley and Madame Pietra are not fair specimens of the genus police witness. Now, Sir, in the course of that inquiry, an attempt was made to discredit a witness because he had not followed to the police station immediately to make his statement there. Well, Sir, I think I can show that it is by no means pleasant, and may be exceedingly dangerous, for an independent witness to follow to the police station in such a case. On an appeal one witness stated—and I cite this case because it is clear from the result that the Middlesex magistrates regarded the witnesses of Mr. Williams on this occasion as witnesses of the truth—one witness stated in his evidence before the Middlesex magistrates that when Mr. Williams was taken into custody he endeavoured to force his way into the police station to give evidence on behalf of the appellant, but was violently pushed away and thrown upon the ground. And then, Sir, I have another case which, it seems to me, very strongly illustrates the practice — the most dangerous practice — which prevails of suppressing and discouraging independent witnesses. I will only trouble the Committee with a very few lines from this paper, which is a copy of a correspondence which passed between Sir Charles Warren and Mr. James Richards, of 51, Grosvenor Road, S.W., in regard to the conduct of the police at the Rochester Row Station. Mr. Richards writes on the 15th August, 1886—

"I have a complaint to make against certain of the men on duty at the Rochester Row Station. On my way home on Saturday night about 12 o'clock, I saw an intoxicated driver being removed to the station. A man who was standing by, on being hustled by two plain-clothes constables who suddenly appeared on the scene, got into an altercation with them, and was promptly taken into custody; really because, not knowing who they were, he had expressed an opinion that he was as good a man as either of them, and requested one of them to 'come out in the road and have it out.' The man was quite sober, and by no means a rough customer, and there were only a very few persons present. I was merely a silent spectator of all this; but when the prisoner appealed to me to go with him to the station and state the real facts of the case, I felt it my duty to do so. When I got into the charge-room, however, I was told by these plain-clothes men that the affair was nothing to do with me, and that I had better 'clear out sharp;' and I was, in fact, hustled out by one of them in a most insulting manner. The other was a tolerably civil fellow, and followed me out apparently with a view of trying to smooth matters over; but whilst I was talking to him a man in uniform (No. 955 B) came into the passage, and in the most insolent manner, and using threats, ordered me to leave the station instantly."

Well, a long correspondence followed, and in the result Mr. Richards said that he would leave the case unreservedly in the hands of the Chief Commissioner; and the final letter from the Chief Commissioner to Mr. Richards is in these words—

"With reference to your letter of the 15th instant, I am directed by the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis to acquaint you that he regrets that you were put to any inconvenience on the occasion in question; but, on investigation, it would appear there was no intention of incivility on the part of the officers at the busy station in Rochester Row."

Well, it was not a question of civility or incivility. Of course, we expect to receive civility from police constables; but the point is this—that the Chief Commissioner completely ignored the gravamen of the charge that was made—the gravamen of the charge being that the police at the Rochester Row Station had distinctly endeavoured to suppress independent testimony in a case in which their fellow-constables were concerned; and if you find evidence suppressed in this way, what wonder is it if subordinates follow the example of their chief? Now, I come to one or two administrative acts for which Sir Charles Warren is more distinctly and immediately responsible. I wish to say a word about the General Order issued by him with reference to black-mailing. As to black-mailing I have no evidence, and if I were asked to express my personal opinion, I should acknowledge that the charge of black-mailing against the police is not well founded. However, as to this, Sir Charles Warren contrived to put himself with the public distinctly in the wrong. He writes an Order in the following terms:—

"The Chief Commissioner is, of course, aware that isolated cases of black-mailing may exist, just as the police are aware that offences against the law are committed by persons in every grade of society, and in every body or community. The police are drawn from the public, and are a selected body. Those who fail to do their duty, and whose fault is discovered, are returned to the ranks of the people. If, therefore, the allegations recently made against the police are in any way correct they reflect with still greater force upon the public."

Well, Sir, it is unnecessary to say anything in order to expose the complete absurdity of that statement; but it looks almost as if Sir Charles Warren were hedging a little. It looks as if Sir Charles Warren was preparing himself for proof that those charges are well founded, and getting ready to wash his hands of the whole affair, and to say—"The police may be bad; but you, the public, are very much worse." It is long since an officer in the position of Sir Charles Warren produced a document at once so silly and so offensive to the public, whose servant he is. Now, Sir, I want to say a word or two, as I promised I would, about the grievances of the police. There is one very serious grievance which Sir Charles Warren, by a recent Order, has inflicted upon them. By an Order issued as recently as May last Sir Charles Warren has declared that, except under very special circumstances, no constable over the age of 35 years, or with more than 10 years' service, is to be promoted to the office of sergeant. Now, Sir, how many constables are there in the position here described. I ascertained from the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary the other day that there are no less than 4,227 men who come under the ban of this Order. That is to say, that every third man at least of the Constabulary of the Metropolitan Police is practically excluded from the hope of promotion. Now, Sir, that is not keeping faith with the men in the first place. They had a reasonable right to expect that if their conduct was good they would receive promotion; and this Order has very naturally produced intense dissatisfaction in the Force. I speak as an old official when I say that if you deprive the older men in your Public Service of all reasonable hope of promotion—and that is the practical effect of Sir Charles Warren's Order—you will have in the Force a leaven of dissatisfaction which, in the end, will ruin the efficiency of the whole Service. You cannot possibly, under such circumstances, keep a Public Department sweet. Now, Sir, just a word or two with regard to Sir Charles Warren from the taxpayer's point of view. Sir Charles Warren has most magnificent ideas; he is a very expensive personage for the public to deal with. Since he controlled the Metropolitan Police no fewer than four superior posts have been created, involving in the aggregate a cost of more than £3,000 a-year. Now, it is only fair to say that, as regards the creation of two of those posts, the responsibility does not rest solely upon the shoulders of Sir Charles Warren, because their creation was recommended by the small Departmental Committee which sat last year. But in regard to the two other posts to which I refer—that is to say, the posts which are styled "Assistant Chief Constables"—Sir Charles Warren appears to be alone responsible. Now, Sir, I should like to say a word about Sir Charles Warren regarded from the point of view of an ordinary citizen, who considers that the police is a civil force, and objects to its being converted into a semi-military body. Now, from this point of view, what are the facts? Since Sir Charles Warren's influence became effectual with the Metropolitan Police there have been five superior appointments made, and in each case an ex-military man has been appointed. The appointments were these—Colonel Roberts, Lieutenant Colonel Monsell, Major Gilbert, Colonel Dean, and Captain Knollys. With regard to Captain Knollys, I think the case is particularly noteworthy. Captain Knollys will control the preparatory section of the Metropolitan Police. Now, in the debate we had in this House last year on the February riots the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) complained of the want of a proper system of instruction in police duties for the rank and file of the force. The complaint made, I believe, was well founded. It was one which could have been removed by appointment of a Divisional Superintendent. One would certainly have thought that if there was a defect in the training of this preparatory section the proper way to remedy the defect would have been to appoint to the control of it a gentleman who had a large experience in police duties; whereas, as a matter of fact, Sir Charles Warren has appointed a military officer, who has had no experience whatever of police management. But it is only fair that I should say, even with regard to the appointment of these military men, that the responsibility does not rest entirely with Sir Charles Warren, because there is a passage in the Report of the Committee of last year which supports Sir Charles Warren to a certain extent, but not the whole way which he has gone. In that Report I find it stated—

> "As to the position and qualification of the Chief Constables, we agree with the Committee of 1879 that they should be gentlemen of good social standing, and, as a general rule, officers who have seen service in the Army and the Navy."

This statement says that, as a "general rule," these gentlemen should have been officers in the Army or the Navy. But, as a matter of fact, Sir Charles Warren, at every vacancy which has occurred, has appointed a military man; and I do not think that his action, or even the recommendation of the Committee itself, will commend itself to the opinion of any fair-minded man, or to the taxpayers generally. They are asked what should be the position and qualification of the Chief Constables, and they say that it should be that they should have good social standing. Well, Sir, I should have thought that the proper qualification for a Chief Constable would be some knowledge of a Chief Constable's duties. No doubt, there are plenty of men of a good social standing who would be extremely anxious to maintain their social position at the public expense; and I have no doubt that, on the strength of that recommendation, both the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary and the Chief Commissioner of Police would receive a very large number of applications from impecunious gentlemen who have, undoubtedly, got social standing; but, for my part, I stand almost aghast at the vista of jobbery to which it opens the door. Now it has been suggested to me that the responsibility for that condition of things rests rather on the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary than with Sir Charles Warren. Permit me to say, in the first place, that if the Home Secretary's salary were about to be voted by the Committee, I should feel a very keen thrill of satisfaction in proposing that it should be disallowed, or, at any rate, very materially reduced. But the Home Secretary's salary is not the question before the Committee; and perhaps I may say that it is even more important we should have in the position of Chief Commissioner of the Police a man whom we can thoroughly trust than we should have in the position of Home Secretary a man whom we can thoroughly trust. The Home Secretary is constantly under our eye, and if he does anything which hon. Members disapprove of they can pull him up; and I certainly think there has been a marked change for the better in the demeanour of the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Matthews) since a very notorious case. We may almost regard him now as a repentant sinner; but so far as Sir Charles Warren is concerned there have been no signs of repentance, for I may say—and I call the public Press as a witness in corroboration of my words—that the manner in which Sir Charles Warren conducted the inquiry into the Cass case has not increased the confidence which the public were disposed to place in him. Well, Sir, at all events, the question before us is not the conduct or the responsibility of the Home Secretary, but the conduct and responsibility of the Chief Commissioner. For a great part of the mischievous system which I have endeavoured to illustrate to-night Sir Charles Warren, of course, is responsible only as the head of that system; but I think that this House would fail in its duty if, when it finds a mischievous system prevailing, it did not hold the official head accountable for that system. I have brought this question before the Committee at a length which I very much regret. [*Cries of* "Hear, hear!"] I regret it perhaps even more than those Gentlemen who are good and kind enough to say "Hear, hear!" I regret it very much indeed; but I think the cases which I have put before the Committee will show that there is radical need for reform in the police system of the Metropolis. As the Representative of a very poor district in London I am peculiarly interested in this question. It is very unlikely, in the first place, that a rich man would be made the subject of an unjust accusation; but, if that were to happen, he would go into Court attended by a formidable array of the most eminent counsel, and he would be sure to receive justice. But in the case of a poor man all these circumstances are reversed; and, therefore, I ask the sympathies of all those who desire a reform—a radical reform—of the system under which as it exists at present numbers of Londoners, and especially of the poorer and humbler classes of Londoners, are almost in daily jeopardy. I beg to move that the Vote be reduced by the sum of £1,500.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Item A, Salaries, be reduced by the sum of £1,500."—(*Mr. Pickersgill.*)

MR. JAMES STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton): I do not desire to detain the Committee for more than a few minutes; but I want particularly to call their attention to the cost of the Metropolitan Police. It may be in the recollection of the Committee that last year I obtained a Return comparing the cost of the police in London, in the City of London, and in the Metropolitan Police District, with the cost of the police in various large towns in England. The Return gave the cost of the police per pound of rateable value, per inhabitant, per acre, per inhabited house, per mile of street, and the cost per constable of the whole of the expenses returned. I have not had an opportunity of calling attention to this Return before. Perhaps the Committee may notice that from this Return, which is No. 193, the cost of the Metropolitan Police per pound of rateable value, and per inhabitant of the Metropolitan Police District, stands considerably above that of the police in any principal town. Now, in the City of London the cost of the police per inhabitant stands very much in front of the cost of any other force; but perhaps it is hardly fair to isolate the City Force in this way. In the Metropolitan Police District, however, the cost of the police in the year returned per pound of the rateable value was 8¾*d.* It is in the present Estimate 9*d.* per pound of rateable value, of which 4*d.* is defrayed out of the Consolidated Fund, and 5*d.* out of the rates of the Metropolis. If you take the large towns, such as Liverpool, for instance, and go down the list as it stands here, you find that the cost of the police per pound of rateable value is in Liverpool, not 9*d.* as in London, but 5¾*d.*; in Glasgow, 6¼*d.*; in Birmingham, 7¼*d.*; in Manchester, 7½*d.*; in Leeds, 7½*d.*; in Sheffield, 6½*d.*; in Edinburgh, 4½*d.*; and I need not continue down the whole list. Then, again, taking the cost of the police per inhabitant, in the Metropolitan Police District it is 4*s.* 11*d.*; in Liverpool, 3*s.*; in Glasgow, 3*s.* 8¾*d.*; in Birmingham, 2*s.* 5½*d.*; in Manchester, 4*s.* 2*d.*; in Leeds, 2*s.* 3½*d.*; in Sheffield, 2*s.* 0½*d.*; in Edinburgh, 2*s.* 9¾*d.*; and, again, I need not go further. Coming to the cost of the police per constable employed in ordinary police duties, the cost in the Metropolitan District also stands very high. It is £100 17*s.* 3*d.*; whereas in Liverpool it is £84 2*s.* 7*d.*; in Glasgow, £78 18*s.* 8½*d.*; and, again, I need not continue down the list. But a considerable portion of that difference may be accounted for by the fact that the Superannuation Fund comes to about 10 per cent of the whole cost, and if you knock that off you reduce the cost per constable in the Metropolitan Police District to £90, or, roughly speaking, thereabouts. But, even then, you notice the Metropolitan Police District stands at the head of the list, with one or two exceptions which, perhaps, may be capable of explanation, although I confess I do not know what the explanation may be. Now, of course, the ordinary police constable in London does not get more than the ordinary police constable elsewhere gets. In the matter of salary a police constable gets, roughly speaking, about 28*s.* a-week. There is a considerable scale of pay, of course; but the salary runs, as nearly as I can ascertain, the same at Liverpool, at Manchester, and other places as in London. Another addition to the cost in the Metropolitan Police District may arise from the cost of management. In the rough estimate I have given I have, in speaking of the constable, deducted from the cost of the police in the Metropolitan District what seems to be the cost of the Superannuation Fund, which is not necessarily excluded in the case of the towns I have mentioned. There is also excluded, by the nature of this Return, all the sums paid for rents, rates, and taxes, &c., which may fall and which do fall, to a considerable extent, upon the Metropolitan Police Fund; whereas, in other towns, it may be involved in other expenses not so returned. Still, as these are eliminated, there can be little doubt that the Metropolitan Police is a more expensive body to manage and carry on than, generally speaking, the police forces of large towns; and not only that, but it seems to me, judging from the cost per pound of the rateable value and the cost per inhabitant, that there is a very considerably larger police force employed in London in proportion than in other large towns. That, of course, is a mere matter of judgment for the Commissioners of Police; but whether that judgment might altogether be in the same sense if the Commissioners of the Police were responsible to the ratepayers I will not presume to say, though I have little doubt that the general cost of management would be reduced were the Commissioners responsible to the ratepayers; and that really brings me to the point that we are at this moment dealing with. London, in this respect, affords a very remarkable instance of the mischief of these expenses not being within the control of the rateyayers themselves. It is now intended to fix a rate of 5*d.* in the pound upon the Metropolitan Police District, which is imposed entirely without the consent of the ratepayers of London, and under circumstances in which no voice in the management at all is given to those ratepayers. And I want to point out another matter connected with the police of London. It may be justly said that London has such a large representation in this House that we can come to the Home Secretary and the Government and, in this House, make out our case in respect to extravagance, if there is any. Our discussion now is a proof that we can. We can get a quarter of an hour or two hours' discussion on this important question; but how can we be really affected by the discussion when the question is finally settled by a large number of Members who are not at all affected in the matter? If the Metropolitan Members were to be formed into a Grand Committee it would be a different thing, and I am not at all sure that much good would not come out of such a Committee; but I want to point out that which may have escaped the notice of Members of this Committee generally, and that is that since the last discussion of this Committee we have enfranchised the police. That was a measure which had the approval of both sides of the House. The enfranchisement of the police does not affect a town like Liverpool, or the Representatives of a town like Liverpool, or any other big town. But it must be observed that at present the only Court, so to speak, for determining any of the matters that affect the police of London is the House of Commons. Now, when you look at the number of police in London; you find there is on the average about 220 or so to every constituency in London; and, therefore, you raise up a very considerable source of influence in this House of a kind which is undesirable. That is an additional argument in favour of removing all dealings with these municipal questions in London from the immediate control of this House. I make these remarks, I confess, more to emphasize the need in London of Metropolitan Government than to urge the reduction of this Vote, which I am bound to say it seems to me very difficult for any Metropolitan Member to obtain a reduction of, and which, in fact, is a Vote which ought not to be submitted to this House at all.

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): We are obliged to the hon. Gentleman (Mr. J. Stuart) for having called attention to the contents of the Return which was granted upon his Motion last year. He has given the true explanation of the difference in the cost of the Metropolitan Police and other police forces—namely, that the Superannuation Fund is included in the cost of the one, and not in the cost of the police forces of the other towns. The hon. Member also broadly stated the contrast between the charge for the Metropolitan Police, and the charge for the police in many of the large towns. I agree with him that the cost of the Metropolitan Police is still too high, and I hope it is capable of reduction. This is a very large and difficult subject, and these are the first Estimates that have come immediately under my control. I have not yet been able to ascertain the direction in which reductions may be made; but the hon. Gentleman will observe that the Metropolitan Police number upwards of 11,500 men, and that that is 11 times as large a number as that of any of the police forces of the largest towns. I need not point out that, in order to keep in anything like decent order a force of this magnitude, a large superior staff is required in London; while it is not needed in the large towns. The hon. Member for South-West Bethnal Green (Mr. Pickersgill), whose watchful eye I am glad to see is always on the police and on the First Commissioner, has complained of the recommendations of the Committee which sat last year to consider the organization of the police. The Committee, which was appointed on the recommendation of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers), pointed out that one defect in the police system was the want of an intermediate grade of superior commanders, who should decentralize, so to speak, the police force. The five military personages, of whose appointment the hon. Member for South-West Bethnal Green complains, were appointed Chief Constables in the different districts of London. These appointments could not be made without entailing increased expenditure. It is extremely difficult to get from the heads of the Constabulary in a locality information in pecuniary matters; and I am, therefore, obliged to proceed with much forbearance on the subject. I imagine, however, that the accoutrements and clothing of the Metropolitan Police are more expensive than in the cases of our large towns. In the Metropolitan Police, for instance, there are between 400 and 500 mounted men, who, while being efficient, are expensive to maintain. Then, again, there is the conversion of police stations from leaseholds into freeholds, and the cost of alteration in the cells in order to secure a proper separation of the sexes. Well, all these operations in London are costly, extremely costly. I admit that repairs alone come to a very considerable sum.

Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): I rise to a point of Order, Sir. I desire to ask the right hon. Gentleman if these repairs are charges?

The CHAIRMAN: Order, order!

Dr. TANNER: Certainly, Sir.

Mr. S. SMITH (Flintshire): I should like to know, Sir——

The CHAIRMAN: Order, order!

Mr. MATTHEWS: Among other things, we have undertaken an audit, because, without admitting that there is any malversation, items do creep into the accounts which ought not to. Then, with regard to the observations of the hon. Member (Mr. Pickersgill) in reference to particular cases, I do not propose to detain the Committee at any length, although he himself, at great length, rehearsed the various topics of which, perhaps, hon. Members have heard enough already in the shape of Questions. I really do not think there is anything more to be said about the Parton case. In what way the Commissioner of Police is to blame I cannot understand. The constable, no doubt, misbehaved himself, and he has been reprimanded and punished. It is well that it should be borne in mind that the constable had been warrant officer for 12 years without a report having been made against him. With regard to another case of still greater notoriety, in which criminal proceedings have been instituted, I shall not follow the example of the hon. Gentleman. I shall not enter upon it or say a word about it. In the case of Mr. Richard, I cannot see how the Commissioner of Police was to blame. Mr. Richard was anxious to testify to the fact of having seen committed what he considered an offence, and when he went to the police station he was hustled. Sir Charles Warren has offered a handsome apology for what has occurred, and I am at a loss to see what need there is for anything further. With regard to to the grievances of the Force concerning promotion, Sir Charles Warren is in no way responsible; and as to the appointments to superior posts, all I have to say is that they were made in compliance with the recommendation of the Committee of this House, and I am in no way responsible for that recommendation or its adoption.

Mr. JAMES STUART: While I admit very largely the explanation of the difference between the cost of the London Police and that of local towns, that difference cannot be altogether attributed to the expenses connected with the police stations, though in London they are, no doubt, very great. In the remarks I have made I did not attach any blame to the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Matthews), or to the present Government. It is the system of which I complain. I consider it most unfortunate that the Home Secretary, who is not responsible in any way for London government, should have to apologize in this House for the expenses of the police. It must be admitted that it would be better that such a duty were imposed upon somebody directly responsible to the London ratepayers, or to a body representative of the London ratepayers. I wish to make this explanation, because I am sure the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Matthews) is as desirous as anyone to effect reductions wherever they can be properly made.

Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): Of course, Mr. Courtney, I always wish to subject myself to your wise judgment and discretion in all things, and when I rose to a point of Order a few moments ago the Home Secretary (Mr. Matthews) was talking about the alterations in the cells of police stations, and about the cost they entailed. Alterations come under quite a different Vote to the one we are now discussing, and I maintain that the right hon. Gentleman was quite wrong in the course of his observations. Although I am an Irishman, I take considerable interest in the Vote for the Metropolitan Police. Some hon. Members of the House may ask why an Irishman should take an interest in the Metropolitan Police Vote. [*Laughter.*] I see the hon., gallant, and learned Gentleman the Member for Central Sheffield (Mr. Howard Vincent) smiles; perhaps the hon., gallant, and learned Member who, I suppose, smiles for a purpose, will tell us why he laughs. The reason why I do take an interest in this Vote is that in the Metropolitan Police Force there are many Irishmen. Upon the occasion of a large fire recently, I was simply surprised to see the number of Irishmen who were gallantly doing their duty to the Metropolis. Naturally, therefore, as an Irishman, I take an interest in this Force, although it is employed in the City of London. I suppose that in a short time we shall be able to give better employment to these men at home. Now, as a junior Member of this House, and as a man who has not the experience of any of the hon. Gentlemen who have addressed the Committee upon this subject, I must say it appears to me to be simply puerile to say that this force must of necessity cost more in proportion than the many minor police forces which are scattered about the country. A much stronger staff is required; but the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary said just now that this Metropolitan Police Force requires more supervision, and more outlay in consequence of that supervision, than other police forces. In short, he maintains that this body of men requires more supervision than a scattered body of men requires. Latterly, I have visited many parts of this land, and I have been amazed at the well-organized forces I found in all directions, and notably in the country districts. I think you have got a very excellent police force in the Provinces, probably a great deal better than you have in this City. I do not want, however, to make any remarks upon recent cases which have occurred in connection with the Metropolitan Police. I do not want to throw dirty water upon this Vote; but, at the same time—I see the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary (Mr. Matthews) understands what I mean—but, at the same time, I must say this—that in the country districts, and notably in the country parts of England, you have got an excellent police force without half the expenditure of money you incur in connection with the Metropolitan Police, for which police we are now asked to vote this annual contribution. If the right hon. Gentleman were to go into any of the country towns or districts he would see a police force there well equipped and well kept; they are not many in number, but they are scattered here and there, and, naturally enough, if they are to be kept in an efficient state, they require considerable supervision. Well, what becomes of the right hon. Gentleman's argument that the Metropolitan Force, a centralized force, is obliged to cost more money for supervision than a separated and disseminated force costs? Is such an argument not ludicrous in the extreme? And, accordingly, I maintain that the right hon. Gentleman must be at fault somehow or other. These matters will have to be explained, as other things will have to be explained. The right hon. Gentleman will be called upon, aye, and at no very distant date, to give an account of this force, which may be wielded for right, which ought to be wielded for right, but which, in many respects, is not wielded for the support of law and order, or for the safeguarding of the people. If the Questions which have been addressed to the Government are not answered, I must say, judging from what I know of the English people—and, thank goodness, I know something about them now—[*Laughter.*] Hon. Members may laugh. At one time I did not care much about the opinion of the English people; but now, thank God, owing to the expression of opinion by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), I am proud of the English nation—I am proud of the English democracy; and, therefore, I call upon the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Matthews) who is in charge of this Vote, to try and protect the English democracy against what at the present time appears to be—[*Laughter*]—Ah! you may laugh; I do not happen to have the experience of the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary (Mr. Matthews), who kindly takes his hat off to me, but I can afford to pass by in silence the jeers and laughter of certain hon. Members, and I appeal to Members on the other side of the House to take cognizance of the iniquities which are practised in connection with this Police Vote. I call upon a responsible Minister, who does not laugh—[*Cries of* "Order!"] The right hon. Gentleman does not laugh—he knows better. The right hon. Gentleman is more courteous to Members. [*Cries of* "Order!"] Mr. Courtney, I ask for your support. I maintain, in connection with this Vote, that the country ought to ask for some definite expression of opinion upon the views which have been expressed upon these Benches. I certainly hope that before this Vote is passed the right hon.

Gentleman will offer some opinion to us; otherwise it will be my painful duty to move a reduction of the Vote, at which, perhaps, hon. Gentlemen will not laugh.

Question put.

The Committee *divided:*—Ayes 30; Noes 118: Majority 88.—(Div. List, No. 411.) [10.30 P.M.]

Original Question again proposed.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I confess that I am somewhat astonished that the question relating to the cells in police stations has not been raised by the Metropolitan Members; because, unquestionably, those cells are not fit for the purpose for which they are used. I put this to the Committee as a matter of considerable importance. The persons taken to the police stations may be guilty or not; but, at any rate, decency ought to be observed with regard to the cells in which they are placed. There is another subject upon which I desire to receive some information. I should like to know whether the promoters of race meetings pay for the expenses of the Metropolitan Police who attend those meetings, or whether they are a charge upon this Vote?

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): I am quite in agreement with the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) with reference to this question of police cells, and I ask whether the Home Office Authorities are prepared to carry out the scheme that was submitted to them two years ago for the thorough reconstruction of the police stations in the Metropolis? It was suggested two years ago that the Home Office should deal with this question of the Metropolitan Police as it is dealt with in Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, and other large towns—that is to say, that money should be borrowed to put the stations in a proper state, and the principal and interest paid off—by Terminable Annuity. I consider that the Metropolitan Police is, on the whole, economically and wisely managed; but I wish to call attention to the Superannuation Fund, which is carried out on a scale in the Metropolis which does not prevail in any other part of the Kingdom. I understand that a large number of police constables are systematically pensioned off, when they are under 50 years of age, and after but a few years service. I want to know whether the right hon. Gentleman will lay down a more stringent rule with reference to superannuation of police constables? There have been some rather severe remarks made on the Metropolitan Police. I am not going to defend them, and I think in some recent cases their conduct has been to blame; but I believe that the Metropolitan Police Force should be done justice to as a whole. No doubt there are some black sheep among them; but we know that in London a population of 5,000,000 are kept in order by 12,000 men who are the representatives of law and order, and I am bound to say, as far as I know, that they discharge their duties to the satisfaction of the public. I do not think that on the discussion of this Vote it should go forth to the public that there is anything like distrust towards these 12,000 men as a body, or that there is any doubt as to the ability and integrity with which they discharge their duties. I hope the Committee will at all times investigate with the greatest severity any case of proved misconduct; but, at the same time, I think we are bound to render a just tribute to a body of men against whom there have been no serious cases of complaint for a long series of years.

MR. MATTHEWS: I am sure the Committee will agree with the observation of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wolverhampton, that, upon the whole, the Metropolitan Police are a singularly well-behaved body. I have myself been astonished to learn how few cases of misconduct are brought forward in connection with them. So far as I have observed, if a complaint is made, the presumption is that the policeman has not misconducted himself—I am bound to say that the presumption is in his favour rather than against him. I am, therefore, very glad to hear the remarks of the right hon. Gentleman, which I most cordially endorse. With regard to the question raised by the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere), I may say that we are doing our utmost to improve the condition of the police cells; but it would not be desirable or expedient to expend a large sum of money upon the old police stations, which are leasehold. All I can say is that the moment we obtain freehold sites we shall do our best to make the cells all that they ought to be. Power was taken last year to borrow £22,000 for the express purpose of converting these stations into freeholds, and improve their general condition and arrangements; and I would point out that in the 10 years ending on the 31st of March, 1886, the sum of £127,900 has been expended for this purpose. The statement is that there are leaseholds in the possession of the Metropolitan Police, at rents amounting to £3,000, which, as soon as we are able, we intend to replace by freeholds. Many of these police stations, I am sorry to say, are very inadequate for the purpose for which they are intended. The Police Authorities have been obliged to take leasehold premises where they are required, and it has not been deemed wise to make any large outlay on the property. I have before me a table, showing the cases in which the number of prisoners have exceeded the number of cells. The condition of things which this points to is most objectionable, and it is one which, as far as we are able, we are endeavouring to avoid. There are, however, not many cases in which more than one person has to be put into a cell. I think the case of Vine Street is the worst in this respect, because I find that the average number of prisoners per cell is three and a-half. This, of course, is an undesirable state of things, and one which should be put a stop to as soon as possible. With regard to the question of superannuation, it is quite true that the scale is a very liberal one. It provides not only for pensions according to terms of service, but also for an extra payment when a policeman is wholly or partially disabled in the execution of his duty. I have been called to account for having disallowed the allowance in one case, and I confess that I have felt it my duty to look with a little suspicion on medical certificates relating to injuries which some men are said to have received when on duty. I have taken care to see that the extra allowances are only given in the case of injuries by violence, and not where they have been due to the constable's own carelessness, or causes which do not entitle him to such extra allowance. I think the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wolverhampton will agree that a fairly liberal system of well-earned pensions is one which conduces greatly to good feeling and to faithful service among the members of the Police Force. When men know that if they are injured in the discharge of their duties their families will not be left wholly unprovided for, or driven to seek parish relief, they will be all the more ready to do their duty fearlessly. With regard to the attendance of the police at race meetings, this is a special service, and the expenses of the police have to be borne by those who employ them.

MR. PICKERSGILL: I should like to remind the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wolverhampton that I commenced the remarks I made just now with a tribute to the general good qualities of the police, and that my complaints were directed exclusively against the system for which Scotland Yard is responsible. I now feel it my duty to move the reduction of the Vote by £1,000, being the salary of the Legal Adviser of the First Commissioner. In the Report of a Departmental Committee which sat in 1879 the abolition of that office was recommended.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! There is no item of that kind in the Vote. The hon. Member may possibly be able to justify the reduction of the Vote by £1,000; but he cannot move it on the ground stated.

MR. PICKERSGILL: It will be in the recollection of the Committee that the Departmental Committee recommended the abolition of the office of Legal Adviser, and that they also recommended that the discharge of his duties should be provided for by the appointment of one Assistant Commissioner, who should have legal knowledge. The time has now arrived for considering this matter, because only a month ago Mr. Davies, who filled this office, died, and the office is now vacant. I rely on the recommendation of the Departmental Committee that this office should be abolished. I am sure, from my experience of Departmental Committees, that they would never recommend the abolition of any office, unless there were the strongest reasons in favour of such a course. In this Report reference is made to the fact that one of the Assistant

Commissioners should possess legal knowledge; but, as a matter of fact, that is the case now, because Mr. Bruce is a barrister, and I believe he was appointed because he possessed that knowledge, and I believe also with the ultimate view of abolishing the office of which I am speaking. We have heard to-night that many posts have been recently created; it is, therefore, desirable that we should, if possible, make some reduction in this Estimate, and I am of opinion that a more reasonable reduction could not be made than by abolishing this, as it seems to me, unnecessary office of Legal Adviser.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £274,620, be granted to Her Majesty for the said Services."—(*Mr. Pickersgill.*)

MR. MATTHEWS: This question of the Legal Adviser to the First Commissioner is not an easy one to deal with. I may inform the Committee that I shall be in no hurry to appoint a successor to the office; but allow me to remind the hon. Member that there are many points on which competent legal advice is necessary for the First Commissioner of Police. In the first place, it is very necessary that the police should be advised, with reference to many charges which they have to bring, as to how they ought to be drawn. Difficult questions are constantly arising with regard to the Statutes, and with regard also to the Police Regulations on subjects by no means easy in themselves; statutory changes are continually being made, in which it is necessary that the Commissioners should be posted up, and investigations have to be made into the titles of land purchased for sites for new police stations and similar matters. There are, in short, a whole series of points on which legal advice is most necessary. No doubt, much of the work might be done by a solicitor; but we should probably find that the solicitor's bill would come to as much as we are charged here. It is clear, therefore, that the amount of legal work that will have to be done in connection with the Force is more than one man can get through; but whether or not it will be necessary to appoint a barrister I have not yet made up my mind. I intend to go rather minutely into the case with the Commissioners in order to see whether this is necessary. In the meantime, I repeat my assurance that there is a great deal of legal business in connection with the daily work of the police, which is in itself sufficient to justify the expenditure of this sum of £1,000.

MR. PICKERSGILL: I should like to point out that since the Departmental Committee recommended the abolition of this office a third Commissioner has been appointed; and I would therefore ask if the work could not be so apportioned to the other Commissioners that it would leave Mr. Bruce free to undertake the whole of the legal work which falls on the office. The right hon. Gentleman has, however, met me very fairly on this question, and I will not press the matter any farther than to ask leave to withdraw my Motion.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Original Question again proposed.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): I wish to call attention to the necessity not only of putting the police cells into a proper condition, but to that of having them whitewashed, and to the use of a little chloride of lime. I remember that 10 years ago the cells at Bow Street were in a shocking sanitary condition; and I do urge upon the right hon. Gentleman the necessity of preventing objectionable accumulations in the cells.

Original Question put, and *agreed to.*

(9.) £21,000, to complete the sum for Special Police.

DR. CLARK: I should like to have from the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department some information with regard to the purposes to which this Vote is applied. I think some statement is also desirable as to the reasons why the Vote, which was originally £15,000, has increased to £37,000 for the present year.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I can give the hon. Member for Caithness some idea of the way in which this Vote is made up. The special protection of Government buildings of various kinds requires the service of 1 inspector, 7 sergeants, and 178 constables. The additional force for the protection of the Houses of Parliament, which was put on some time since, and is maintained during the Session, numbers 2 sergeants and 35 constables. For other purposes, there are required 1 inspector, 8 sergeants, and 36 constables, and for the purpose of supervising all this machinery there are employed 2 inspectors, 4 sergeants, and 22 constables. The total expenditure for these purposes is £35,760, and we have this year taken a margin of £1,240 in the amount asked for under the present Vote. The hon. Gentleman will see that the whole of this Vote is to supply the protection deemed to be necessary for the public buildings and property in the Metropolis. I hope the time is not far distant when we may be able to relax the present strict police supervision; but it will be in the recollection of the Committee that not long ago some of the finest public buildings were attempted to be destroyed by explosives of a very dangerous character.

Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): It seems to me unnecessary to retain these words about dynamite on the Vote. Why not leave them out, and merely state that the Vote is for special police duties?

Dr. CLARK: I suggest that it would be better not to have Government Offices distributed all over the South-West District. There is the Irish Office, for instance, placed in a street by itself, and the consequence of that is that two policemen have to be kept there to look after it.

Vote *agreed to.*

(10.) £856,286, to complete the sum for Police—Counties and Boroughs, Great Britain.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary (Mr. Matthews) whether he is able to give us any information with reference to the detention of prisoners awaiting trial? Some years ago there was a very important Report made in regard to the very serious want of accommodation for prisoners——

The CHAIRMAN: Order, order! That is quite outside the scope of this Vote.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: These prisoners are in charge of the police throughout the country.

The CHAIRMAN: The point is quite outside the scope of the Vote.

Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): Since we cannot have upon this Vote the explanation that my hon. Friend the Member for East Donegal (Mr. A. O'Connor) requires, can we get it in any other way, Sir? It is important that the treatment of the unfortunate men who happen to be detained awaiting trial should receive some attention.

The CHAIRMAN: Order, order! That question I have ruled to be disconnected with this Vote.

Dr. TANNER: If that is the case, Sir, may I make an inquiry as to Item B, Sub-head 2? I find there is a decrease in this Vote. As far as I happen to be individually concerned in criticizing these Estimates, it is, of course, pleasing to find that the Votes are decreasing; but I should like to know the reason why there is a decrease, and I think there are a great many other people in this Realm who would also like to hear some substantial reason for the decrease. Item B refers to travelling allowances, and the decrease is extremely slight; it is only a matter of some £25. I should like to know, however, how it comes about that these items, which are usually made to tally year by year with a most delicious, charming accuracy, do not tally in the present instance? I regret that the First Lord of the Treasury, who is so exact, and who requires everything to be put down in a systematical and business-like way, is not now in his place. I should have asked him, had he been present, how it is there is a decrease in this Item? [*Cries of* "Divide!"] If hon. Members opposite press me, I shall certainly insist upon a Division; aye, and bring more matters to a Division. We are here to transact Business, and I maintain that our Business should be transacted properly. I want to know why it is that we have this decrease of £25 in the travelling allowances, and I also hope that subsequently the very important question raised by my hon. Friend the Member for East Donegal (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) will receive some attention.

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Stuart-Wortley) (Sheffield, Hallam): The only explanation I can give of this small decrease of the Vote is that the £25 was not required.

Mr. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): Perhaps the hon. Gentleman in one word will explain how it is that Item D is increased by £7,000?

MR. STUART-WORTLEY: The increase is automatic. It is in consequence of the increased numbers required by local Police Authorities.

Vote *agreed to.*

(11.) Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum, not exceeding £508,018, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1888, for the Expenses of the Prisons in England, Wales, and the Colonies."

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): I desire to put a Question to the Government in regard to the Convict Prison at Dover. I observed that the sum of £5,000 is taken in the present year for this prison; £44,000 has already been expended on the building, and £68,000 is the ultimate cost, and of that £5,000 is asked for in the present year. Now, I need hardly point out that this item is inseparably connected with the cost of the proposed Dover Harbour, and last year a sum of £5,000 was asked for for the maintenance of the works at Dover Harbour. In consequence of the opposition raised in various quarters of the House that item was not pressed, and in the current year the Vote is altogether knocked out of the Estimate, and no money is now being asked for the extension of Dover Harbour. That raises the very serious question whether it is worth while to continue the erection of the convict prison there. Apart from Dover Harbour, I presume it never would have been contemplated to erect a convict prison at Dover. In other words, the two matters are inseparably connected, and if it be not intended by the Government to ask the House of Commons to adopt a Vote for undertaking the extension of Dover Harbour, I presume it will be quite unnecessary to erect a convict prison in that locality. I wish, therefore, to ask the Government what is really their position in regard to this important question? It appears to me it is really not worth while to continue the present works, if it is not intended to further progress with the harbour. On the other hand, if it be intended to continue this convict prison, I should like also to ask whether this particular item includes anything for works at Dungeness Point, as I understand a subsidiary convict prison is intended to be erected at that point also in connection with the works on the Dover Harbour?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): This item for the Dover Prison does not conceal any hidden design in regard to Dover Harbour. The item is merely for completing the work which was begun some years ago by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt); £8,000 was taken for the work last year, and we ask for £5,000 this year. The total cost of the prison is to be £68,000, of which £49,000 has been already spent. I think that the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Shaw Lefevre) will see that we have reduced our Prison Vote enormously. The policy of the Government, which I think the right hon. Gentleman will himself approve, is to take all convicts not under sentence of death out of London, and place them, as far as possible, on public works in the country. The works at Dover will serve like those at Dartmoor and Portland for that purpose. I have no doubt that we shall recoup the cost of Dover Prison by closing some other prison.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): I really think the time has arrived when the House of Commons should make up its mind with reference to Dover Harbour, for we are in this position—that last year two or three pertinacious Members of this House practically put a stop to what was the deliberate decision of the House of Commons some years ago. We have to provide, in some shape or other, for convict labour. Since the abolition of transportation we have to provide in this country labour not for ordinary prisoners, but for prisoners undergoing sentences of penal servitude. The works of Portland are now completed, and there is, practically, no further accommodation for convicts in the Portland Prison. The House of Commons, after inquiry as to the construction of a harbour, either at Dover or Filey, determined that a harbour should be built at Dover, mainly for the purpose of providing for convicts, and something like £70,000—I think the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Matthews) said £48,000; but I think we are a long way on towards £70,000—has been spent upon these prison works. In providing for convict labour, you must first complete a prison in which the convicts are to be housed during the performance of the labour, and in accordance with the vote of this House this large sum of money has been expended in building a convict prison at Dover. If you do not provide these men with labour you will have to keep them idle. What are you to do with them? The Committee should make up its mind at once as to whether it will proceed with the construction of a harbour at Dover, because, if a harbour is to be constructed elsewhere, we shall have to proceed to erect a convict prison at the place. As I have said, the controversy was as to whether a harbour should be constructed at Filey or at Dover. I am not now going to open up that controversy; the House of Commons decided in favour of Dover as against Filey; but two or three influential Members of this House would not accept the decision. I think my right hon. Friend (Mr. Shaw Lefevre) is quite justified in asking the Government what they mean to do in respect to the harbour; because, if it is not intended that the extension should be proceeded with, it is not necessary that a convict prison should be erected at Dover.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: Practically, the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary (Mr. Matthews) has not answered my question at all. My contention is, that the question of the erection of this convict prison at Dover is inseparably connected with the extension of Dover Harbour. The erection of this prison was proposed in connection with the Dover Harbour works; indeed, no one would ever have dreamt of erecting a prison at Dover if it had not been intended also to commence large extension works in regard to the harbour. Apparently, all idea of extending the harbour has been dropped; and therefore the continuance of the erection of the convict prison becomes a matter of very doubtful expediency. It is necessary to employ convicts somewhere. If you abandon the Dover Harbour works, you must employ the convicts elsewhere. It appears to me, therefore, that the Government ought to make up their minds at once whether they will commence these Dover Harbour works or not. The Government should come to a decision one way or the other, either to commence the works or not. If they intend to commence the works, a Vote should be presented to the House, in order to take the decision of the House of Commons on the subject. If they come to a decision to drop the extension of the harbour works, that, in my opinion, would involve the stoppage of the convict prison works, because the convict prison at Dover would be useless, and it would be necessary to build a prison elsewhere, where the new harbour was to be constructed.

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): I am sorry I was not in the House when the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Shaw Lefevre) raised this question. As I have had something to do with the omission from the Estimates for this year of the Vote for Dover Harbour proper, perhaps I may state what took place. The right hon. Gentleman and the Committee will remember that last year there was upon the Estimates a Vote for the sum of £1,000 for the purpose of making some preliminary examinations with the view of framing some Estimate to present to the House as to the cost of the proposed Dover Harbour. Objection was taken to the Vote, and the Government did not press it. So far as Dover Harbour proper is concerned, there has been no expenditure, no step whatever taken with a view either to prepare an Estimate or prepare plans. The House ought to be informed, and ought to have before it some plan with some reliable Estimate, before they undertake an expenditure which I have the best reason to suppose will not be less than £1,000,000 sterling. The Government, in framing these Estimates, had to consider what should be done. It is quite true that the prison which is being built will be of no use if the harbour works are not proceeded with; but it is also true that before committing the House to the expenditure of £1,000,000 the House ought to be in possession of some reliable *data* on which to come to a decision. The question was, what were we to do? We saw no more economical course to take than to continue the employment of the convicts upon the completion of the buildings on which they are now engaged. The sum of £5,000 is asked for this year for the purpose of proceeding with the erection of the prison buildings at Dover; but no decision has been arrived at by the Government as to what shall be done in regard to the harbour. We have already got on hand one harbour. It is being constructed, as the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Shaw Lefevre) knows, at Peterhead, and the estimated cost of it has risen from £500,000 to £750,000, with the possibility that it will reach even more than that. I believe there are very serious doubts in the minds of competent engineers as to whether Dover is not the very worst place in the whole country which can be selected at which economically to employ convict labour. They think that the saving by the employment of convict labour at Dover will be less than at any other place at which they could be employed. This raises a serious question, which the Government must deliberately and carefully consider; and it will be the duty of the Government before the next Estimates are prepared to endeavour to come to some conclusion, and to make some recommendation to the House. I hope that after this explanation the Committee will feel that, although there has been nothing done as regards the harbour, we are taking the only economical course we could—namely, to continue to employ the convicts in building the prison, deferring the question of the enormous expenditure which must take place if the Dover Harbour is proceeded with until the House can be in possession of every information respecting it.

Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE: I am sorry to trouble the Committee again; but, in point of fact, the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Jackson) has confirmed all I have said. He says that if it is not intended to proceed with the harbour works this convict prison will be useless. That is just what I started with; and he further says that the harbour will cost more than £1,000,000; that in the opinion of competent people Dover is one of the worst places at which to employ convict labour; and that there would be less saving from the employment of convicts at Dover than at any other place. I think that, under these circumstances, we require a little more light before we proceed further. It is quite clear that if the House and the country come to the conclusion not to proceed with the Dover Harbour works this expenditure of £45,000 will be thrown away; and, therefore, the sooner the Government come to a conclusion the better. I hope that within the next few weeks the Government will seriously inquire into the whole subject, and ascertain what will be the cost of this extension, if undertaken, and what will be the saving effected by convict labour. I think we have some reason to complain that a decision was not arrived at by the Government between last Session and the present.

Mr. JACKSON: I entirely agree with the right hon. Gentleman that the Government ought to make an inquiry speedily; but let me point out that before any decision is arrived at it is absolutely necessary that some expenditure should be incurred for surveys and making borings to test the condition of the foundations, &c. I can assure the right hon. Gentleman it is a matter of anxious consideration to us, and that we shall endeavour to arrive at a conclusion before we submit the Estimates next year.

Mr. PICTON (Leicester): I wish to call attention to another item in this Vote, and to move the reduction of the Vote by a small amount. The smallness of the amount, however, is quite consistent with the great importance of the principle which is at stake. It is nothing less than the fairness with which contracts are given out by the authorities that have to do with them; and I trust the Committee will be good enough to give me their attention while I state, very briefly, what the facts are which have induced me to bring forward the subject at the present time. I may say at once I have no complaint to make against the present Government, as the incident to which I have to allude took place before they came into Office. It is the system that is concerned and the system of which I have to complain. Last year an advertisement appeared in various papers asking for tenders for the supply of drugs to Her Majesty's Prisons. Now, in Leicester, the borough I have the honour to represent——

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): I rise to Order, Sir. I have a Motion to make in respect of Sub-head A, Salaries, and I should like to know whether we can return to Sub-head A, if we take a

Division on the Motion of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Leicester (Mr. Picton)?

THE CHAIRMAN: It would not be possible to move the reduction of Subhead A, if the hon. Member carries his Motion to a Division.

MR. PICTON: I am not sure, Sir, whether I shall take my Motion to a Division; it depends upon what I hear in reply. I must say, Sir, I have risen two or three times with a view of bringing on this subject, and I should like to proceed now. If you direct me to sit down, of course, I shall do so.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Gentleman is entitled to persevere.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I want to draw attention, Sir——

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order!

MR. CONYBEARE: I rise to a point of Order, Sir. I desire to raise a question concerning the salaries of the chaplains. I do not know whether I shall be debarred from doing so if the present Motion is proceeded with.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Gentleman ought to be more vigilant. The hon. Member (Mr. Picton) is in possession of the Committee, and is entitled to proceed if he desires to do so.

MR. PICTON: I put this Notice upon the Paper a long time ago, and if hon. Members wished to bring forward previous Amendments they should have done so. I was saying that an advertisement appeared in the papers requiring tenders for drugs to be supplied to Her Majesty's Prisons. In the borough of Leicester, which I have the honour to represent, there is a firm known by the title of Messrs. Richardson and Co., which supply drugs to a large number of hospitals and medical societies. The firm has been established for nearly 100 years; therefore it is no new undertaking. It has endeavoured to keep pace with the times; it has altered its methods of business and modes of analysis so as to provide the best drugs necessary for medical practice. Messrs. Richardson and Co. sent in their tender, the tender was not accepted; but they ascertained by means which I need not speculate upon, because the facts were acknowledged by the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary—they ascertained that the successful tender offered a price 7½ per cent above what they had offered. Messrs. Richardson and Co. had tendered at 20 per cent below the list of the prices drawn up by the Prison Authorities; whereas the successful tender was only 12½ per cent below the prices of the Prison Authorities. The right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary, when I put the question to him on the subject, acknowledged that the facts were substantially as stated; but he added that it appeared to him to be reasonable that the Medical Department should have power to test the drugs, and that pure drugs should be obtained. Now, those words seemed to imply that my constituents probably did not offer pure drugs, or the best drugs. I therefore could not allow the matter to rest where it was, and I am prepared to tender the best possible evidence that they are competent to supply as pure drugs as anyone else in the country. I have in my hands here a letter from Dr. Frederick Treaves, who holds an important position in the London Hospital. Dr. Treaves, writing in the present year to Mr. Richardson, says—

> "In support of your application to the Home Office for the supply of medicine to the prisons, I can only state that the relations of your firm to the London Hospitals has been of the most satisfactory character in all matters relating to the drugs supplied. Several preparations of your own that you introduced to our notice have been extensively employed in the London Hospitals. I need not dwell upon the high character and well-earned position of your firm. Whatever you have done you have done well, and I know of no large firm of chemists with a sounder reputation, who would be better able to undertake the tender to which I have alluded."

I have also obtained 31 testimonials from medical men holding very excellent positions in all parts of the United Kingdom to the same effect, and under these circumstances it can scarcely be held that these gentlemen were incompetent to undertake the contract. Then why was their tender declined? No sufficient reason has been given. The Home Secretary could only suggest that the authorities had a right to take the purest drugs. Of course they have; but I have given evidence to show that these gentlemen are well able to furnish the purest drugs. It therefore naturally occurs to one that there must have been some other reason than that for giving the tender to others, whose tender was 7½ per cent above that of Messrs. Richardson and Co. What these reasons may have been I do not for a moment presume to say; but it is not unknown that favouritism is exercised for various reasons in giving out Government contracts, and it is of the utmost importance that we should jealously watch these matters, lest wrong should be done. I should not like for a moment to suggest that anything worse than personal favouritism is at work; but still it is necessary to guard even against that. I do not know who personally may have been responsible for giving out these tenders, and therefore I make no charge against anyone personally. But so long as no sufficient reason is given for accepting a tender of 7½ per cent higher than the tender made by a highly respectable firm I think the circumstances appear suspicious. I have therefore felt it my duty to give Notice to move, as I shall now do, that the Vote be reduced by the sum of £95. The reason why I mention this sum is that the Home Secretary informed me, when I asked him a Question upon this subject, that the difference of price amounted to only £95, as though he thought it was merely the amount of money that was in question. The amount of money is a trifling consideration. It is the reputation of a highly respectable firm that I am anxious about. Accepting the Home Secretary's information that £95 was the difference, and as £95 too much was spent. I now move that the Vote be reduced by £95, under the sub-head for drugs supplied to Her Majesty's Prisons.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Item G, Medicine, &c., be reduced by the sum of £95, in respect of Drugs."—(*Mr. Picton.*)

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. STUART-WORTLEY) (Sheffield, Hallam): No one can complain of the hon. Member acting as the champion of his constituents on this occasion. But, Sir, the question involved in the reduction which he proposes is one which reaches very far. It involves the whole question whether, when tenders are invited, one should have regard merely to price, and not also to quality. I confess that though there are cases—I do not say this is one of them—where the system of open competition is valuable, a wise discretion must be exercised in the acceptance of tenders, where, as in the case of drugs, quality is a matter of such supremely essential importance. In such cases it may well be that a system of limited tenders would be preferable. Although the present contract binds us for two years, I intended, before the hon. Gentleman gave Notice of this Motion, to see whether, in the future, it would not be more advisable to proceed upon the principle of limited tender in regard to this class of contracts.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): I hardly think the Committee will accept the speech of the Under Secretary for the Home Department (Mr. Stuart-Wortley) as a satisfactory explanation of the circumstances under which this contract was given. In the first place, the Prison Commissioners invited public competition and open tenders, and the hon. Gentleman says that they ought to have adopted the system of limited tender—that is, allowing only a certain number of contractors to tender. That is, no doubt, a wise course in certain cases; but you cannot go back now. You offered this tender to public competition. You put this contract up to public competition by public advertisement; and unless you are prepared to show that these gentlemen whom my hon. Friend (Mr. Picton) has alluded to were disqualified, or incapable, or incompetent of supplying pure drugs, I maintain you are bound to accept their tender, if their tender was the lowest. It is quite certain that any large Corporation or private concern in the country would, under these circumstances, have accepted the lowest tender. Now, I want to know whether the tender accepted was the tender of gentlemen who had previously contracted?

MR. STUART-WORTLEY: If the right hon. Gentleman will give me Notice of that Question I shall be very happy to answer it.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER: If the Home Office know nothing about the matter I have nothing more to say.

MR. MATTHEWS: The responsibility of the Home Office for the acts of the Prison Commissioners must surely be limited, as far as a practical Ministry is concerned, to the period when that Ministry was in Office. The Ministry of the day is not responsible for what the Prison Commissioners do under the rule of the Government of which the right hon. Gentleman himself was a Member. I think the right hon. Gentleman's questions should be addressed to the person who represented the Home Office when this tender was accepted.

Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER: The Home Secretary has favoured me with a reproof which I accept with all humility; but I venture to tell him that he has completely misapprehended the Constitutional position of Ministers in this House with reference to the Estimates. This matter has nothing whatever to do with this Government, or with that Government. The Home Office, as representing the Prison Commissioners, is bound to furnish all information requisite respecting the action of the Prison Commissioners. Now, this has not been sprung upon the right hon. Gentleman without Notice. The Motion has been on the Paper two or three months, and there has been ample opportunity for obtaining information. Questions have been put in this House, and the charge, whether just or unjust, whether fair or unfair, is that this contract was not properly given out. I do not charge the Home Secretary with any responsibility in the matter. It would be absurd to charge him or his Predecessors with any responsibility; but what this Committee wants to know in voting money to the Prison Commissioners, whom, as I say, the Home Office represents, is, whether that money has been fairly, properly, and impartially spent? It would be absurd to introduce anything of a political character into this matter. The Prison Commissioners are a permanent body; they do not change with the Government. The Home Office is the responsible medium through which they communicate with the House; but I gather that really nothing is known by the Representatives of the Home Office as to the circumstances under which this contract was given out. We have these facts before us—that there was open tender by public advertisement, and that the tender of respectable traders who have a certificate from one of the most competent medical men in London as to their competency to discharge this contract tendered for the supply of drugs for £95 less than the firm whose tender was accepted, and yet their tender was refused. I think the Committee is entitled to some better information than that afforded by the Under Secretary.

Mr. LAFONE (Southwark, Bermondsey): The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) is entirely incorrect in supposing that it is necessary to take the lowest tender.

Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER: Not necessary, but usual.

Mr. LAFONE: Generally, in the case of public tenders, a public body guards itself by saying it will not necessarily accept the lowest tender, or any tender. The question is whether such a safeguard formed part of the advertisement issued in this case or not.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): I consider that the reply of the Under Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Stuart-Wortley) is very unsatisfactory. In a matter of drugs it is very easy indeed to test the quality by analysis. Materials sent in may easily be sent down to Somerset House, who will soon say what they contain. That is one of the points in which one ought to have open competition. It is easy enough to show what we want, and if articles are not supplied accordingly they can be refused.

Mr. A. M'ARTHUR (Leicester): The hon. Gentleman the Member for the Bermondsey Division of Southwark (Mr. Lafone) is quite right in saying that it does not invariably happen that the lowest tender is accepted; but where you have two tenders from equally respectable men, and where one tender is 7½ per cent lower than the other, it is certainly the duty of the Government to accept the lowest tender. I maintain that the firm of Messrs. Richardson and Co. is of the very highest respectability. Indeed, my hon. Friend (Mr. Picton) and myself have testimonials showing that nothing could be higher than the commercial standing of the Company in question. As my hon. Friend stated, there is no intention to blame the present Government in the matter. I think that my hon. Friend, in bringing this matter before the Committee, has discharged a public duty. I do not wish to attach blame to either one Party or the other; but I know that in many cases a similar course has been pursued to that pursued in this case. As guardians of the public purse, it is our duty to investigate all these cases, and see as far as possible that justice is done.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid.): As a medical man, I agree that in the matter of drugs it is important that public bodies should not at all times necessarily accept the lowest tender. What they should aim at is the obtaining of the best article. That is all important; and, accordingly, I heard with a certain amount of misgiving and doubt the remarks which emanated from my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester (Mr. Picton). But then, on the other hand, in this matter you invited open tenders, and I presume you wanted to get the best article. One well-known firm—a firm which is backed up by the testimony which the hon. Member has in his possession — notably by the testimony of Dr. Treaves, of the London Hospital—sent in the lowest tender, but it was refused. I therefore maintain that some reasons should be assigned why the offer of Messrs. Richardson and Co. was rejected. Up to this no reason has been given. We are here to exact a reason. I sincerely hope that if the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Matthews), who is in charge of this Vote, does not give us some reason why this tender was not accepted, and why the country is put to the additional expense, hon. Members opposite will lend their voices to the remonstrances which this Committee ought to make, and for the demand of the reduction of this cost by the amount of the extra expense to which the country has been put. I trust the Government will afford us some further information. If they do not, my hon. Friend (Mr. Picton) ought certainly to go to a Division.

SIR EDWARD J. REED (Cardiff): I hope my hon. Friend (Mr. Picton) will not divide. I entirely sympathize with the object he has in view; but it is as well that the hands of the Government should not be tied in a matter of this kind. I know that great pressure is put upon the Government Department in the matter of the acceptance of contracts, and I know of many cases in which the Public Service has suffered enormously by the acceptance of the lowest contracts. Cases have come under my observation in which tenders were offered more than 50 per cent below other tenders for the same contract. I am perfectly persuaded that the lowest tender is often accepted to the great disadvantage of the country. All we ought to require the Government to do is to act thoroughly and impartially in the matter of contracts. Having regard to my experience of the acceptance of contracts, I certainly cannot vote for the reduction of the Vote which my hon. Friend (Mr. Picton) has proposed.

MR. PICTON: If I had heard that an error had been made, and that steps would be taken to guard against its recurrence, I should be more disposed to withdraw my Amendment; but, again and again, it has been insinuated that there was something defective in the tender furnished by Messrs. Richardson and Co. There has been no evidence of that kind whatever. The firm in question have supplied with drugs the London Hospital, the Cheltenham Hospital, and the Worcester, Southampton, West Bromwich, Northampton, Leicester, and other large hospitals, and they are continually doing so; and it is very hard indeed that it should be imputed that they do not supply pure drugs. As I have said already, this is not a political matter, and the present Government is not concerned in it. I really think I must carry my Motion to a Division.

MR. WOODALL (Hanley): No one can find fault with my hon. Friend (Mr. Picton) if he presses his Motion to a Division, as a protest against the way in which this tender for drugs was accepted. But I am not quite sure whether he has quite appreciated the undertaking given by the Home Office to inquire into this matter. This matter involves a very small amount, but a great principle is at stake. The question whether contracts should be open to public tender, or to limited tender, has engaged the attention of a Departmental Committee on which I have lately served. The hon. Member for Leicester (Mr. Picton) has repudiated the suggestion that the quality of the goods of Messrs. Richardson and Co. was inferior to the goods supplied by the successful tenderer. I trust the Home Office will furnish us with the name of the successful tenderer, and will even go further, and will say that they will give the reasons why the successful tender was preferred to that of Messrs. Richardson and Co., which was very considerably lower.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): It seems to me that the most reasonable course for my hon. Friend (Mr. Picton) to pursue would be to withdraw the Amendment at present, and listen to any statement which can be made on Report by the Government. Evidently the Government do not quite know the facts with regard to this case. By Report, which I presume will be taken to-morrow, they may become possessed of the facts, and I venture to suggest that we should have samples of the drugs placed in the Tea Room, in order that any Gentleman who is so desirous may test their quality.

Question put.

The Committee *divided:*—Ayes 34; Noes 114: Majority 80.—(Div. List, No. 412.) [11.50 P.M.]

Original Question again proposed.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): I beg to move the reduction of this Vote by the sum of £1,000, and in doing so I desire to call the attention of the Committee to the present position of the surgeons employed in the prisons belonging to different parts of the Kingdom. The salaries paid to the prison surgeons in England are very fair; they begin at £400 and £500 per annum, and are increased to £600; but in Scotland the salaries to the same class of medical officers begin at £200, and increase only to £300 per annum. Then, if you take the prison surgeons in England, in the larger prisons, where they begin at £400 and increase up to £600, and take those in Scotland, say at Glasgow, where the salaries begin at £230 and increase to £300, you will find that the Scotch prison surgeon has more prisoners under his care than is the case with any of the English prison surgeons who begin with twice his salary. I am aware that under the head of this Vote I cannot do anything to increase the salaries of the Scotch prison surgeons; but I think the matter at least worthy of consideration on the part of the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary (Mr. Matthews); and I would further point out that, even taking the case of the Irish prison surgeons, they are much better off than the Scotch, because many of the prison surgeons in Ireland begin with a salary of £350, and go on increasing up to £400 per annum. Then, if we take the case of the assistant surgeons in the English prisons, they begin at a salary of £250, which is increased up to £350, so that here the assistants get £500 more per annum at the commencement than is paid to a full surgeon in Scotland, and finish with £50 more than the maximum salary of the Scotch officer. Now, I should like to point out what is the class of men who receive these appointments in England——

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Caithness cannot be allowed to continue the discussion of a specific reduction of the Vote after a subsequent part of it has been reached. Besides, the hon. Member is moving a general reduction of the Vote, and, at the same time, confining his observations to the case of the prison surgeons' salaries.

DR. CLARK: I would only call your attention, Sir, to a previous ruling. I understand that where we have items from A to Y, and some hon. Member rises to move an Amendment on Y, but another hon. Member interposes, and says he intends to move the reduction of an item under a previous letter, it has been the practice to stop, and allow the previous question to be discussed. As, however, I understand you to rule that if Y is begun, all the intervening items from A cannot be discussed, the only way in which the matter so passed over can be brought forward is on the Report of the Vote. I would, if that be in Order, propose to discuss the matter without making any Motion.

THE CHAIRMAN: That would be another irregularity. If a particular matter cannot be moved, of course it cannot be discussed.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I was under the impression, when the hon. Member for Leicester (Mr. Picton) commenced his remarks, that he was dealing with the subject which was then before the Committee.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member (Mr. Conybeare) had risen before, but had given way.

MR. CONYBEARE: I was watching my opportunity, and had already risen once, but gave way under the impression I have stated; and I was quite taken by surprise when I found that the hon. Member for Leicester had passed on to a matter beyond the point then under discussion. The question is, what are we to do? There are some of us who think there are very important matters in connection with this Vote which ought to be discussed. For instance, I should like to ask the Government some questions in reference to the prison chaplains, and I should like to know whether I am debarred by what has taken place from mentioning the matter?

THE CHAIRMAN: That bears on Item D also, and, consequently, cannot be gone into now.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I should like to point out to the Committee that in a number of these prisons a large number of men are confined, and many of them for a considerable term of years. Of course, the Prison Authorities can have no jurisdiction with regard to the length of the sentences under which prisoners are kept in confinement; and the point with which I am concerned is, not the length of the sentences, but the administration of the prison discipline by the Prison Commissioners in the prisons that are covered by this Vote. I think it will be admitted that the treatment of the prisoners is a very important question, and the discipline maintained in our prisons is important in more respects than one. With regard to the prisoners themselves, it is of the first consequence that the prison treatment should not only be punitive and deterrent, but that it should also be of such a nature as is likely to improve rather than to deteriorate the character of the persons so confined. Now, it so happens that in most of our gaols the prisoners are put to work which is of a distinctly lowering and brutalizing kind. If these prisons were wisely administered, if the Prison Commissioners would turn their attention to such means of occupying the prisoners as would cause their terms of sentence to work in a manner that would be beneficial to their character, in that case the general community would be benefited by the prison system, instead of being injured, as is now the case. What, let me ask, is the result of the present system? You take a man and sentence him to a long period of imprisonment, in the course of which you deal with him in such a way as to convert him from a man into an animal. You first of all lock him up all alone for a long time, the amount of time he is allowed to spend in the society of his fellow men being cut down to the very smallest quantity, and while he is thus kept in prison he is set to work of a disciplinary character which is only calculated to degrade rather than to elevate his character. The occupation of picking oakum, which is persistently pursued in many of our prisons, and is frequently pointed to in the Reports of the Prison Authorities as a rumunerative employment—though, as I regard it, of a very bad description—is one the very nature of which is calculated to degrade the man who is employed at it, as a large number of prisoners are for months and sometimes for years. When a prisoner goes out of gaol and into the world, after seven, 10, or it may have been 14 years of such employment, he not only finds that his place in society is gone or filled up by someone else, but that most of his friends are dead or removed, that there is scarcely anyone who knows him, and that there seems to be no room for him in the busy work-a-day world outside the prison, and he goes about even a worse man than when he was first put within the prison walls. He may, previously to his arrest, have had some knowledge of and some kind of aptitude for industrial occupations; but by putting him to the inferior kinds of employment, to the merely animal kind of work he has had to perform in prison, you have brutalized and effaced in him everything of a higher character which belonged to him in the first instance. This is not only a cruel wrong to the man himself, but it is also a bad thing for society; because men of the class I am speaking of, when they come to find that there are no avenues open to them for the exercise of some honest avocation, drift almost from the necessity of the case into the recognized criminal class. Therefore, I hold that so far as it tends to bring about such results your prison system is a faulty one, and I may add that I believe it to be faulty because the Prison Commissioners do not administer it with that humanity and intelligence which I hope yet to see manifested in the carrying out of so important a matter. I admit that, as compared with our British prisons of some 50 or 70 years ago, the prisons of the present day are satisfactory to a certain extent, because in former days they were simply dens of the most inhuman barbarism, and since then you have somewhat ameliorated the condition of the inmates of your prisons. But inhuman sentences of 20 years' penal servitude, which I believe you have no moral right to inflict, are still in force, though at the present moment we have no right to discuss that subject; but the conduct of those who regulate the punitive treatment of the prisoners is another consideration. I say that the punitive treatment of these men is radically wrong, inasmuch as there is nothing in the nature of it to reclaim them or elevate them into a better nature, and to give them a chance when they are liberated from prison of making a fair start in some honest mode of life. Therefore, I say, you injure these men and degrade them by your prison treatment, and you also injure society by rendering it almost hopeless that any good can come of the system you adopt; and what is the consequence of it all? People outside, instead of putting any trust in the results of your English prison discipline, avoid having anything to do with a man whom they know to have been imprisoned for any length of time; whereas in Ireland, some years ago, in our intermediate prisons, so judicious was the system that the men who had been subjected to it were in demand almost before they came out of gaol, this being because the discipline was so superior to that which is adopted in England. I believe, however, that this system of discipline in Ireland has not been followed out as it might have been; but certainly I may say, with regard to the English prisons, it is true that no one who can help it would think of employing anyone who had undergone any lengthened period of imprisonment. I should also have liked to discuss the treatment of untried prisoners; but I find that the money applicable to this purpose is in the hands of the Local Authorities, as distinguished from the Imperial. It appears to me that this would have been more in Order on the Vote on which a sum was taken in aid of the Local Authorities; and as you, Sir, have ruled that it would be out of Order to go into that, and as the Vote I have referred to seems to be the only one on which the matter could be properly brought forward, I will not attempt further to pursue the point. Even if I had permission, believing it would be out of Order, I should not now avail myself of it. There is, however, another point I should like to ask a question about, and that is in reference to the fine fund, which is formed from the fines levied by stoppages from the officers' pay, and is appropriated to the advantage of the general staff of officers; but as that amount is deducted under Sub-head D, and if we wanted to discuss Sub-head O it would be difficult to do it, because Sub-head O is connected with Sub-head D, and we must not deal with Sub-head D because it comes before Sub-head G, which has been already dealt with. This system of taking the Votes is, to say the least of it, very embarrassing. Well, Sir, the next point I wish to urge is this—that in many prisons the prisoners are employed in certain industries. There is, for example, the industry of mat-making. Now, it appears to me that this system of employment is very unfair to the non-criminal industrial classes outside the prisons. It does not seem to be right that the Government penal establishments should be brought into open competition with the outside industries. The Government utilize the labour of the prisoners in the production of mats and other articles, which are manufactured really at a loss, regarding them from a commercial point of view, and which are sent into the market to compete with the productions of private traders, and to the distinct detriment of the private traders. However desirable it may be to work our prisons on an economical plan for the benefit of the community, it is not fair to subject private industries to this sort of unfair competition. I think, therefore, that the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary would do well to inquire whether, if it be necessary to pursue the business of mat-making in our gaols, it would not be wise to take steps to prevent the unfair competition to which I have referred. I may add, in connection with this mat-making question, that it is currently reported that certain favoured persons are allowed to appear on the Home Office list, or, rather, the Prison Commissioners' list, and to buy these cheaply-produced articles from the Government at very reduced prices—that is to say, there are certain privileged persons who are permitted to come in with a sort of right of pre-emption by which they are enabled to buy these things cheaper than anyone else. I say that if these mats are to be sold at all they ought to be sold openly, and the system of privilege which at one time prevailed, and which I am told does prevail still to some extent, is only another among the many instances of the unfair way in which things of this kind are managed. I will not now take up any more time, but will only add that I have mentioned these points because I thought they were matters which well deserved the attention of this Committee.

MR. CONYBEARE: There are one or two things I should like to refer to, although we have been jockeyed out of our right to discuss some of the points that might be raised on this Vote. Perhaps I ought not to say we have been "jockeyed." I do not mean that, and I am aware that we shall have the opportunity of dealing with those matters which have had to be passed over when we come to the Report. There are, however, other matters arising upon this Vote with which we are at liberty to deal—certain points which I desire to bring forward in addition to what has been mentioned by the hon. Member for East Donegal (Mr. Arthur O'Connor). I observe here an item the figures of which are set down in various sums, and, in some cases, large sums, for the reconstruction and improvement of prisons. There is one sum of £32,000, another of £25,000, and so on. I do not take these particular sums in these particular cases as objectionable, because, no doubt, large prisons like those at Bristol, Norwich, and Nottingham require considerable alteration or improvement from time to time. But there are a large number of small prisons in this country upon which very large sums of money have also been expended. I refer particularly to the prison at Dorchester. Now, that prison is one in which the average number of prisoners is only 90, and yet the sum of £30,000 has been expended during the last two years in rebuilding and reconstructing that place. When we see all these prisons scattered about all over the Kingdom with large staffs of officers attached to each, the question naturally arises, is it not possible to do more than has been done in the way of consolidation? There are, doubtless, a number of prisons in which the average number of prisoners is less than 100, and in which a chief warder has to do the business of a Governor, and I suppose that some expense is saved under that head; but what I desire to suggest is, that in these cases a good deal of expense might be saved through reducing the number of prisons by consolidation and removing the prisoners from some of them altogether. Let us take the case of the Bodmin Prison. Bodmin is within a short distance of Plymouth, and when we find that there are only 40 prisoners confined there, I think that that number might as well be taken care of at Plymouth as retained at Bodmin with a separate establishment. This is only a suggestion; but I think it worthy of consideration on the part of the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary, who must see that the large expenditure in connection with some of these small prisons holding only 30 or 40 prisoners is altogether out of proportion to the necessities of the case. In connection with the question I desired to raise, but which I was precluded from going into, in reference to the prison chaplains, I shall have something more to say when we reach the Report stage of this Vote. There is, however, another matter in regard to which I wish to make a suggestion. It is well known that when prisoners are about to be tried they are exposed to a system which is explained in a letter from Mr. Horsley, who shows that these poor creatures are fleeced and robbed by the legal touts—the prison solicitors—who infest the purlieus of our gaols. It is stated that some of these poor men, and women too, who have got into difficulties, will raise any amount of money they can, by borrowing from their friends, or using up all the hard-earned savings they may have got together, for the purpose of feeing a solicitor for the defence at the time of trial, and in many cases I know that they have to pay a great deal more than they could be properly called on to pay for such a purpose; and very often the whole business is only a sort of specious swindling. I am not now referring to any particular cases, but merely to what I believe to be a general practice—a practice that operates very prejudicially against the interests of the prisoners; because when they come out of prison after, perhaps, a very short term of imprisonment, they have not only denuded themselves of any savings they may have made, but they are also, in all probability, in debt to their relations for money which they have borrowed to pay these touts for what purported to be a defence, but which they would have been just as well without. The suggestion I offer to the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary is as to whether some mitigation of this nuisance might not be effected by placing in the different prisons a list of the fees required for special services, such lists to be hung up either in the cells or in some conspicuous place in the gaol, so that the attention of the prisoners may be drawn to them? In this way all the prisoners who may need legal assistance would be able to get it without being fleeced to the extent they are at the present time. I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman will be able to give me an answer now; but if he is not I will repeat the question on a future occasion. I may add that I have not brought this matter forward for the purpose of ventilating a supposed grievance. I have discussed it with the Governors of some of our prisons, and they have assured me that what I have described constitutes a real hardship. This is corroborated by what has been written in the public Press by Mr. Horsley, who probably knows as much about the subject as even the prisoners themselves. I believe that a real boon would be bestowed upon the unfortunate prisoners if some such suggestion as that which I have just made were acted upon. I do not suggest anything unreasonable in the shape of low fees being established; but I think it would not be difficult to draw up a reasonable and moderate scale, so that the prisoners might have the opportunity of knowing what are the proper fees and what are not. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will give his attention to this matter, and that something may, before very long, be done with regard to it.

Mr. HANDEL COSSHAM (Bristol, E.): I do not intend to go into the subject which the hon. Member for East Donegal (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) has raised with regard to the way in which prison labour is utilized; but I would suggest that prison discipline in reformatories should be better attended to in our prisons and reformatories. I am afraid that the kind of labour which is enforced in most of our prisons is very degrading. I know of nothing that tends so much to degrade a man as when you compel him to perform a kind of labour which he knows to be of no use. As long as labour is useful it is elevating; but the moment it becomes simply a matter of force without being applicable to any good purpose it becomes very degrading and demoralizing. I cannot but think that most of our prison labour is both demoralizing and degrading; and although I admit that it has undergone a very great change for the better, I think it is still capable of great improvement. I think in Massachusetts they make this labour not a source of depression to the country, but rather make it tend to the advantage of the State. There this prison labour is worth more than it costs, and I need hardly say we have not got to that point yet. I think if the Government will give this question the attention that it deserves our prisons might be greatly improved.

Mr. M. J. KENNY (Tyrone, Mid): I wish to draw the attention of the Government to the way in which money devoted by Parliament is expended in one or two of the Imperial convict establishments in the Colonies. The amount of money voted by Parliament has of necessity diminished year by year as the number of convicts is reduced; but the amount of money which it is necessary to vote for the administration of the small sum that is demanded for the maintenance of the convicts does not decrease in the same ratio; and, that being so, it seems to me an abuse that when the sum voted annually for the maintenance of these convicts in our Colonies is constantly decreasing, the sum for disbursing it should not also decrease. I notice with regard to these sums that in Western Australia the total amount to be disbursed is something like £5,000, and one officer receives alone £500 out of that for the purpose of paying this money. It seems to me it is an extremely easy task to disburse £5,000 a-year, and a luxuriant salary to receive £500 for doing so. The sum to be disbursed decreases every year, but the salary remains the same. Then, with regard to the sum to be expended in Tasmania, the total amount is £2,690, and the amount paid to the person who distributes that amount is something like £400 a-year, of which this country pay half and the Colony pay half, whereas in Western Australia we pay the large sum of £500. In New South Wales the total cost for the maintenance of the convicts is £558, and the salary of the paymaster remains at £150 a-year undisturbed. Then I find this extraordinary head, "The maintenance of invalids—paupers' children—and total expenses." I can understand all except that of the "paupers' children," and I cannot understand how it is possible for the Imperial Government to become liable for the maintenance of the children of those convicts who have been sent out there. I do not see how it is necessary to support these establishments, which might reasonably be done away with. I do not understand the exact system of this administration in Australia, but it appears to me it must of necessity be a sham. It would be better to break up these establishments, and allow these men who are not convicts, in the ordinary sense of the term, to earn an honest living in the Colony, by which this country would be saved something like £10,000 a-year, and these men would be in a position to advance themselves, and their children would cease to be paupers.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): Before we pass entirely from this Vote I would point out that we have not yet had a fair understanding with regard to Dover Harbour. I did not quite gather from the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury how he was going to act. He has intimated that if we do not have a harbour at Dover there would be no necessity for this prison—that there is no work at Dover on which these convicts could be employed. We are going to vote £5,000 this year, and I hope we shall have some assurance that no further sum will be demanded of Parliament until it is definitely settled whether or not there is to be a harbour or not. Hon. Gentlemen will understand what I mean, that there will not be a sum put down in the Estimates for next year, a portion of which will be expended because it is in the Estimates, and the Vote not taken until the end of the Session. That is why I say we ought to have some understanding that the hon. Gentleman will act upon the views he has himself expressed, and that no further money will be spent until we know whether the harbour is to be made, because it is very possible it may not be made.

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): I propose to act, so far as I am personally concerned, in accordance with the views I have expressed. I have already made a memorandum by which attention is called to this matter, and I shall take care to press upon those responsible the necessity of coming to a decision upon it. In my humble judgment it is necessary to arrive at a decision as to what shall be done, though I cannot say it may not be necessary to put something in the Votes next year, even though it may be decided not to go on.

MR. HANDEL COSSHAM: Will the hon. Gentleman inform the Committee how long it will take to complete the prisons at present in progress?

MR. JACKSON: The only approximate date I can give is this. The total estimated cost is £68,000, of which £44,000 has been expended; £5,000 is now taken, and if we go on expending at the rate of £5,000 a-year it would take nearly three years to expend the remaining £15,000.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): Has the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary taken into consideration the wishes of the people of the district? The people in and about Dover, to my certain knowledge, are altogether antagonistic to this method of employing convict labour. History repeats itself, and you will find the same thing has occurred in other places before Dover Harbour was contemplated. There is a subject I have spoken about in this House before now, and that is Haulbowline Docks. There you had convict labour; but what was actually the state of the case? By convict labour you were taking the bread out of the mouths of the local tradesmen, and you are doing that to-day. [*A laugh.*] The noble Marquess the Member for the Brixton Division of Lambeth (the Marquess of Carmarthen) may laugh, but let him go down to Dover and laugh at the tradesmen there; if he does, he will come back with a different smile upon his face. The British working man must be taken into account at the present time. If you must employ convict labour, go and employ it where you will not compete with the ordinary and legitimate English workman. I am speaking now for your own English workman, and it is hon. Members on that side of the House, who have recently taken places in this House, who should speak up for the English workman; but they do not. And what is the result at the present time? You have got people starving, and in and about Dover you are employing convict labour and taking the bread out of the mouths of these men. Is that right? You are passing through a time of depression; will you pay attention to it, or will you not? [*A laugh.*] It is very easy to laugh. The hon. Member may laugh, but we are accustomed to his laugh. It is all very well where there are convict stations in places like Dartmouth, which I have visited; but there you do not come into contact with an industrial population. But in and about Dover it is different. If you converse with the people of the country you would find it is the general opinion that you should employ convict labour in some district where it really will not interfere with the industrial products of an industrial population. I have heard these complaints cropping up again and again in and about Queenstown, where we had a large convict settlement at Spike Island. They call it Port Westward now; but it was Spike Island, and Spike Island it will remain to the end of the chapter; the flavour of convicts hangs over it still. Again, in regard to the Cove of Cork, the people were greatly dissatisfied at the way in which convict labour was employed, and the poor unfortunate people in the district allowed to starve. I would, therefore, ask the right hon. Gentleman who happens to look after this Vote to pay attention to the demands of the tradesmen, the artizans, and labourers in and about Dover, and try, as far as he possibly can, to employ the convicts somewhere else, and give the honest and hard-working English artizan the chance of earning his daily bread.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I rise to move the reduction of this Vote by £5,000. I ventured to offer some remarks upon what I believe a very important and general question—the general treatment of our prison population; and I also referred to the question of industrial work in prisons as competing with free labour outside. Further, my hon. Friend the Member for Mid Tyrone (Mr. M. J. Kenny) asked for information on certain substantial points—namely, the administration of the convict service in another hemisphere, and pointed out that although the amount to be administered got to be very small, and was decreasing year by year, the annual charge for administration was maintained at an obviously unnecessary sum. The right hon. Gentleman has remained seated in spite of this, and I am surprised to see that neither himself nor the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for the Home Department have thought it worth while to allude to any of the points submitted to the Committee. I presume that is because we are told on page 237 that the Prison Board is now under revision—that everything is in a state of chaos in regard to the practical administration of prisons. But the fact is that these Estimates were framed now about 10 months ago, when the Board may have been under revision; but there has been abundance of time for complete restoration of the Board. Whether the Board has been revised and fully constituted I do not know.

MR. MATTHEWS: What Board?

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: The Board the Vote is concerned with, the Prisons Board, which is under revision, as the Vote itself says. I do not know whether it is revised and reconstituted; but, at any rate, whether it is or not, the Home Secretary is responsible for the Vote to this House, and also for the question of the general treatment of prisoners in these prisons, indirectly I admit, but still responsible, and in order to save time I beg to move the reduction of the Vote by £5,000.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £503,018, be granted for the said Services."—(*Mr. Arthur O'Connor.*)

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I was only waiting until the close of the discussion, when I could answer all the points at one and the same time. I really think at this period of the year, and at this hour of the night, it is hardly incumbent upon me to enter into the large subject of prison discipline. I am perfectly aware of the views enunciated by the hon. Member and by others, that when you catch a thief you are immediately to set about reforming him in order to make him into a good member of society—that is a growing belief, and I do not dissent from it. The question of the employment of prisoners is a difficult one. Some hon. Members say they ought to be employed in a better manner than they are at present, and that the prisons should be made self-supporting; others say that you should not under any circumstances enter into competition with any free industry outside the prisons, and those two views are certainly incompatible. If you are not to compete with outside industries you cannot make prisons pay their own way. These subjects are very interesting, but upon this Vote the Committee would hardly expect me to go into them and announce any new plan. Since the year 1837 the number of prisons have been reduced from 115 to 60, so that not bad work has been done in the time, and I think we have almost reached the limit. We have done great things, and the Committee will see we have reduced this Vote by something like £6,000 altogether, and where it is possible we are making still further reductions. Then the hon. Member for Mid Tyrone (Mr. M. J. Kenny) complained about the charges for Imperial convicts and paupers in our Colonies. That is a fixed and diminishing charge which does not depend on the Government of the day. That charge is guided by fixed rules, rules that were laid down between the Colonies and the Mother Country in 1874, by which certain allowances were made in respect of the children of original convicts who had been discharged as Imperial convicts, in a condition in which they were unable to earn their own living, and these charges, or what is called the maintenance of Imperial convicts in the Colonies, were matters of agreement. These are all matters of agreement between the Mother Country and the Colonies, and are fixed charges, and the hon. Member will see that instead of being an increased charge it is a diminishing charge.

MR. M. J. KENNY: I said they were diminishing.

MR. MATTHEWS: It is a charge out of the control of the Government, having been settled by agreement. Then the hon. Member for the Camborne Division of Cornwall (Mr. Conybeare) talked about the taxation of prisoners' bills of costs. That really is a matter which should be done in the Law Courts rather than by the Commissioners. I think myself a prisoner ought to be able to bring in his bill for the taxation of his costs as well as anyone else; but that is not a matter that concerns the Prisons' Commissioners.

DR. TANNER: Before the right hon. Gentleman has altogether finished might I ask whether the number of prisoners employed at Dover is increasing or not, because it is merely with the view of trying to improve local labour that I speak up for the unfortunate people about Dover? I want to know whether the number of prisoners is on the increase or the reverse? I wish to know the actual state of affairs during the last two years, whether you intend to increase the accommodation there, and to turn it into a large convict station for the purpose of doing away with local labour? I want an answer to that question.

MR. M. J. KENNY: In regard to the explanation given just now as to the annual charges for convicts in the Colonies, the charge of disbursing the sum remains the same as I stated; but I made a mistake with regard to the Tasmanian charge. For administering the sum of £2,690 per annum the charge on the Imperial Exchequer is £400 a-year. I thought this country paid £200 and that the Colony paid £200; but I find that is not so, and that the remaining moiety is charged to the Army Estimates. This is an extravagant charge that ought to be diminished.

DR. TANNER: If I do not get an answer to my question I must move the reduction of the Vote.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. STUART-WORTLEY) (Sheffield, Hallam): The number of convicts employed is 198. I shall be able to tell the hon. Gentleman on Report what steps are taken in regard to the increase, but at present there is not much. The difficulty is to find employment for any largely increased number. They are employed in the building of prisons.

DR. TANNER: Is it intended to make an increase of prisoners with the object of employing them on local works?

MR. STUART-WORTLEY: The prison will hold more than are there now.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Original Question put, and *agreed to.*

(12.) £121,261, to complete the sum for Reformatory and Industrial Schools, Great Britain.

MR. S. SMITH (Flintshire): I should like to make one or two remarks on the subject of the Vote and the work that is done in the industrial schools; but I wish to call attention to one defect in the system under which these schools are managed—namely, the want of oversight of the children after they leave the school. As the law stands at present, after the children leave the industrial schools they pass again under the control of their parents and guardians, and the law has no power to prevent them getting into the power of degraded parents and guardians. In a large number of cases the children committed to the industrial schools unhappily possess parents who are not fit to have the control of them, and they are in most cases committed to these schools for the very reason that their parents are not fit to have control over them. We get hold of these children, and out of kindness to them commit them to these schools and keep them for five years, giving them great care. We also give them a very much better education than the great bulk of the children who attend the private schools. But then what happens? After this large expenditure, amounting to about £100 per head, has taken place, at the age of 16 the children are discharged from the schools, and the State has no further control over them; they are permitted to leave the school without any further supervision, and there is no law that restrains the degraded parents and guardians from getting control of these children. I have taken some trouble in this matter, and it has been repeatedly represented to me by the managers of these schools that they have the greatest desire and anxiety to keep these children out of the hands of their unprincipled parents, who are on the watch for them in order to train them up to lie and to vice and crime of every sort. All sorts of means are resorted to by the matrons and superintendents of these schools to keep the young girls in particular out of the reach of the parents and guardians, but unhappily, in many cases, it is not possible to do so; and, as the law stands at present, these children are deliberately handed back to parents and guardians who have been the cause of their committal to and detention in the schools, and who will inevitably drag them back to the same state of vice and crime at which they were found at the time they were committed. That is the position in which we stand at present; and I say it is absurd—that we are pouring water into vessels full of holes, putting these children, so to speak, through a sieve and restoring them to the life from which we have taken them. One of the defects of English law is the overstrained regard we have for parental rights. Parents who have forgotten their parental rights we give full control over the well-being of their children, as if they were the property of the parents, though they may have abused their rights. I wish, therefore, to call the attention of the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary to this matter. I believe in America the rule is that when children have been committed in this way to the State institutions the State takes the position of the parents and acts *in loco parentis*, and continues its State control over them to the age of 21. It does not permit them to return to the custody of their degraded relatives; but takes care of them in such a way that they will have a fair chance of success in the world afterwards. I hope that some attention will be given to this subject, because it is very important, and it applies not only to the children of industrial schools, but in an equal degree to children in pauper schools. The same evil has to be met in one case as much as in the other, and the same unfortunate results arise from having an overstrained regard for so-called parental rights. I would also advocate emigration for these children. They belong to classes which are, for the most part, demoralized. Their associations are bad. It is very difficult to prevent them drifting back to the old associations; and the kindest and most benevolent thing you can do is to give them a new start in life in the Colonies. If you take them away from the old life entirely, they will, in the majority of cases, do well; but let them go back to the old associations, and, in the large majority of cases, all your care will be thrown away. The industrial and reformatory school system is a very expensive one, and we cannot afford to lose all the money we spend on it. I believe that much better results would be obtained if the two points I have mentioned were attended to. First, the protection of the children from their degraded relatives after they leave the homes; and, secondly, the much more copious use of emigration. I wish, therefore, to commend these two points to the attention of the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary.

MR. BRUNNER (Cheshire, Northwich): I want to support the appeal which has just been made by my hon. Friend the Member for Flintshire (Mr. S. Smith). The education which is given in the reformatory schools has precisely the effect which such education ought to have. It makes the boys love work instead of hating it, and you lose a great deal if you allow the boys to return to old associations, where they are taught again to dislike work. The education given in a reformatory school is exactly the reverse of that given in an ordinary prison. Whilst it is exactly the dislike of work which sends a large proportion of the prisoners to gaol, the education which they receive in prison makes them dislike work more and more. In your reformatory schools you go on the right tack. You teach the inmates to like work, and you consequently do a great deal of good. Although it is a very late hour on a late day in the Session, I have been constrained to get up in order to press on the Committee the wisdom of devoting some attention to this subject. I must say that I believe our present prison system, with its long sentences, its degradation, and its absence of work, to be a great mistake.

MR. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.): I wish, Mr. Courtney, to call attention to an item in this Vote, and, if possible, to get some promise from the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary with regard to legislation next Session. The subject I refer to is that of day industrial schools in Scotland. I may point out that the Vote is merely a Vote for England and for the City of Glasgow. Glasgow enjoys the power of establishing day industrial schools under a Local Act of 1878; but none of the other large cities in Scotland have the right to establish such schools. I see in his place the hon. Member for Ipswich (Sir Charles Dalrymple), who was a Member of the Day Industrial Schools Commission, and he will remember that that Commission reported in favour of extending to Scotland the power enjoyed by English towns of establishing such schools, and that a Bill was introduced for the purpose. Unfortunately, that Bill, although it passed the second reading, did not succeed in getting further. My hon. Friend the Member for the St. Rollox Division of Glasgow (Mr. Caldwell) blocked it, and it could not, therefore, be further proceeded with. I understand, however, that the Government have in contemplation legislation on this subject for next Session, and I would earnestly urge on the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary (Mr. Matthews) that this particular matter should be taken up next Session. It is a matter which mainly concerns the five or six large towns in Scotland other than Glasgow. I do not say that they would all put in operation the powers which might be given to them; but, undoubtedly, the School Boards and other Public Authorities in large towns in Scotland are in favour of having those powers conferred upon them. Glasgow already enjoys them under the Local Act I have mentioned, and I think it very desirable that we should have some sort of assurance either that the Government will themselves introduce legislation on the subject, or that they will favour such legislation.

MR. H. T. DAVENPORT (Staffordshire, Leek): I wish to throw out one suggestion in order to meet the difficulty referred to by the hon. Member for Flintshire (Mr. S. Smith)—namely, that of dealing with these children after they leave the schools. I believe that, as a rule, the children in industrial schools continue in the employments which have been provided for them, and do not go back to their parents unless their homes are suitable. Such care is taken of them by the managers that they are generally provided with work which enables them to gain an honest livelihood. The manager of an industrial school in my own county of Staffordshire is very strongly of opinion that much good could be done if an arrangement could be made by which such boys as were anxious to go into the Army could be placed in some institution which, of course, would have to be established for the purpose and kept there for the two years which elapse between the age of 16, at which they leave school, and that of 18. In this way you might gain, it is true, not a large number, but a certain number of most valuable recruits for the Army. These boys have generally got into trouble from the very fact that they are high-spirited and quick-witted, and they would, if they were properly trained, make the very best material for the Army. I have been asked to say this by one who has been a most successful school manager for many years, and who retains the greatest control over the boys after they have left. I am very glad of having the opportunity of putting his views before the Committee.

Mr. BRUNNER: I may say, Sir, that the same appeal has been made to me.

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): I wish, Sir, that we had more time to discuss this important question. I must say I am afraid it is not all managers of schools who are so well qualified to understand and so benevolent as to fill the position suggested by the hon. Member for Flintshire (Mr. S. Smith), and I do not think it would always do to substitute them for the parents. I conceive that even disorderly and wicked parents are entitled to have their own children to themselves. The hon. Member spoke of overstraining the regard for parental rights. Of course, I assent to that expression. The regard for parental rights must not be overstrained, but, at the same time, it must not be disregarded altogether. We must, I think, confine ourselves to the classes of criminal children in reformatories, and to the waifs and strays whom we send to industrial schools. If we go beyond them, we shall have to substitute a national system of guardianship of children for the present national system of education. In America I think there is a system in existence under which vicarious punishment can be imposed upon the parent where the child is led to do wrong and so to become a bad member of society. It is, however, I believe, only when the parent has been punished more than once for misconduct of this kind that a child is taken out of his or her hands. One of the provisions of the Juvenile Offenders Bill introduced this Session was to give the magistrates power, where children of tender age committed offences, to punish the parents if they thought that the parents ought to be punished rather than the children. I am, of course, acquainted with the views of the hon. Member (Mr. S. Smith) on the question of emigration, as he introduced a deputation to me on that subject at the Home Office a short time ago. The hon. Member will, I think, agree with me, however, that if emigration were given on too easy terms we might have a considerable section of the population seeking admission to these schools in order that they might be enabled to emigrate. As to the remarks of the hon. Member for West Edinburgh (Mr. Buchanan) respecting day industrial schools, I think it has been sufficiently shown that there is very much to be said in favour of that class of schools; and in a Bill which I have drafted, but which will not see the light until next year, I have endeavoured to carry out the views which the hon. Gentleman has just expressed. I am not aware that there are any other matters on which I need trouble the Committee on this Vote.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I think this is a Vote which might be reduced with advantage not only to the community, but to the industrial schools as well. Not only is there in this Department an Inspector and Assistant Inspector, a chief clerk, an examining assistant and a number of clerks, but there are also agents for collecting parental contributions—that is to say, a chief agent for the Provinces and eight sub-agents. And then there are allowances for the collection of these parental contributions. It seems to me that great economy might be effected if the collection of contributions from parents were thrown on the Local Authority instead of on the agents. The Local Authority is best able to determine the ability of the parent to meet the demand made upon him or her in respect of the child, and if my suggestion were adopted you might get rid of this very considerable staff, and so effect an economy upon the Vote. You might also make it to the advantage of the Local Authority to secure that the payment of the parent was punctual and complete by interesting the authority pecuniarily in the collection of the money. The money so collected could be taken as part of the local contribution in aid of the schools. In this way you would diminish the Vote; you would lighten the public burden; and you would, at the same time, facilitate and improve the local collection. What is the result of the present system? The Vote is more than it was last year. If you look at the Estimate of Receipts, you will see that, whereas last year £22,000 was received from the parents, this year a contribution of only £19,500 is anticipated, so that, whilst the Vote is increasing, the contributions from parents are diminishing. There is certainly room for improvement, and I think the improvement I have suggested would be a beneficial one.

MR. BRUNNER: I can, from my own experience as a member of a Board of Guardians, confirm what the hon. Member for East Donegal (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) has said. We feel it a very great hardship to have to pay for boys in reformatories, and I have found great difficulty in inducing my colleagues on the Board to send boys to reformatories on many occasions when I thought it would be our duty to do so. One of the objections is that we do not get the contributions paid by the parents, but that they go to the Government. We have to pay the whole of the cost of the boys, and yet the Government pocket the parents' contributions. I do not know whether I am quite correct as to the details; but I know that the Local Authorities do suffer in this matter, and I believe that if the suggestion of the hon. Member for East Donegal were adopted, both the State and the localities would derive benefit from it.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. STUART-WORTLEY) (Sheffield, Hallam): It is undoubtedly a lamentable fact that, whilst the expenses of these schools increase, there is a steady falling off in the contributions of the parents. No doubt, this would be to some extent met by the suggestions made by the hon. Member for East Donegal (Mr. Arthur O'Connor), and by the legislation which is contemplated by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary (Mr. Matthews) a change will be made in the present system. It would, however, be over-sanguine for us to anticipate too great a result from that change, because I am sorry to say that the falling off in the contributions of parents is undoubtedly due to the depression of trade. I may point out to the hon. Member who last spoke that he must not lose sight of the fact that the Treasury does contribute, at certain fixed rates, to the expenses of maintaining children in these schools.

MR. NOLAN (Louth, N.): On referring to the details of the Vote, I find that the Chief Inspector receives a salary of £750 a-year, the Assistant Inspector £500 a-year, and the Examining Assistant, who, I suppose, assists in the examination of the children in the schools, £166. Now, this evening, in regard to the Land Registry Office, I found that one official had for 24 years been receiving a salary of £2,500 a-year for examining a few musty documents, and I suppose endorsing some of them, whilst here we have gentlemen who are engaged in work involving the flesh and blood and the souls of 24,046 children throughout the length and breadth of the land, and who only receive what, compared with the other salaries, must be regarded as a mere pittance. The way in which the salaries of the Inspectors are distributed is, I think, also worthy of attention. The Chief Inspector, after a limited experience, and, as far as I have been able to ascertain, with no preliminary training, receives £750 a-year, whereas the Assistant Inspector, who, as is evident from the figures given here, has spent some 25 years in the service, and who is a gentleman possessed of a considerable amount of zeal and ability, receives only £500, and the Examining Assistant is only paid £166. Now, I should like to ask the hon. Gentleman who is in charge of the Estimates to try and remedy what can only be regarded as rather an unsatisfactory state of things. It is quite clear that there is room for very great improvement in regard to the payments made by parents. I find that the money receivable from parents of the children maintained in reformatory and industrial schools in England and Wales is £15,600. The amount receivable from parents in Scotland is not given by itself, but is mixed up with the contributions from Parochial Boards, the total being £6,500. If we take £3,000 as the sum receivable from parents in Scotland, the total amount receivable in Great Britain will be found to be

£18,600. On turning to the last item on page 251 of the Estimates, I find that the commission paid to police officers for collecting the parents' contributions is £1,100 for the same period. From this I gather that the total contributions received from the parents amounted to only £11,000, as against the £18,600 receivable, so that there seems to be a loss of £7,600 in some way. It is quite clear, under these circumstances, that some reform is necessary in the method of collecting these accounts. With regard to what becomes of the children trained in reformatory and industrial schools, I am sorry to say that I cannot agree with the hon. Member for Flintshire (Mr. S. Smith) and the hon. Member for Northwich (Mr. Brunner). I am rather inclined to follow the view of the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary (Mr. Matthews), and to say that the State should not step in between the child and the parent. If it were possible to do so, and to deprive the child of all that affection which it may be supposed to have for the parent, no matter how degraded, the child would not, I think, in future life be everything that people would wish him or her to be. A child without any feeling of affection or regard for its own parent would be a sort of monstrosity. There is one point which I have not heard mentioned in connection with this subject, and which I think might receive the attention of the Government. At present, reformatory boys, who are trained at considerable expense by the State, are not eligible for admission to the Navy. Gentlemen who have been on board reformatory ships must have noticed that, in point of physique and discipline, the boys ought to make splendid material for the Navy; and yet it is a matter of fact that a boy who has had three, or five, or seven years' training in one of the reformatory ships, and who wishes to join the Navy, is precluded from doing so. I suppose the reason is that the character of Her Majesty's Navy is too high, and that one of these poor reformatory lads, if he joined one of the vessels of the Navy, might lower the character of the sailors with whom he came in contact. I should have thought that, from what I have seen myself of the conduct of sailors on shore, and from what we hear of their proceedings in foreign parts when a number of them land together, it would be impossible to lower their character. [*Cries of* "Oh!" *and* "Withdraw!"] I have nothing to withdraw. It would be impossible to lower their character by any association of that kind. Certainly it does seem strange that the boy who is not good enough for Her Majesty's Navy is quite good enough to go to some civil employer, and perhaps to take a position of responsibility with him. With regard to the Army, I believe that there is nothing to prevent either industrial school or reformatory school boys from becoming soldiers. I should quite concur in what has been said as to the training received by the children in these schools, if the children could always be kept in similar institutions; but I question very much, after some experience I have had, whether the training fits them for the lives they have to lead afterwards. I am myself of Mr. Cobbett's opinion, that people who have to live like ordinary members of society ought to be trained up from infancy in such a way as to fit them to occupy the position they will hold in society; and consequently I am in favour of an extension of the system of day industrial schools. No matter how humble a home may be, no matter even how vicious the parents may be, I believe that a child who is being instructed in a good school had better live at home with its parents than lead what may be called an unnatural life, and one which certainly cannot be continued afterwards. Consequently I think it is a great mistake, where we pay from 4*s.* to 7*s.* a-week for the maintenance of children in reformatory schools, and from 2*s.* to 6*s.* for industrial schools of the bastille character, we only pay from 6*d.* to 1*s.* for the instruction and maintenance of children in day industrial schools. I know it is a difficult question this of managing the waifs and strays of humanity; but I believe, after having thought the matter over for a number of years, and consulted with those who have had a longer experience than I have had, that the true solution will be found not in locking up 20,000 children in bastilles up and down the country, but in bringing them under control in day industrial schools. There may, of course, be some incorrigibles who cannot be treated in this way, and who it will be necessary to place under some very strong discipline; but I believe they will be limited in number; and certainly this House ought to set itself against the system of wholesale imprisonment of children for long terms. I know that certain hon. Gentlemen who take an interest in this subject will bring forward a formidable array of figures to show the small number of general convictions as compared with the time when there were no industrial and reformatory schools; but let me call attention to the fact that children taken up and imprisoned for five years in reformatory and industrial schools represent, of course, only one committal; whereas these children, before the establishment of the reformatory system, were ranging the streets without control, and might be committed any number of times—from 10 to 50—for short terms within the same period. Consequently, figures of the kind are very misleading, and mislead people who, with the best intentions in the world, fall into error. I hope before this Estimate is presented to the House another year that some steps will be taken to develop the day industrial school system, and to minimize the bastille system of the ordinary reformatory industrial schools.

Mr. FLYNN (Cork, N.): Only a few words. Some stress has been on the cost of the maintenance of children in reformatory and industrial schools, and while hon. Members were speaking I have taken the trouble to compare the amount with the cost of collection, and the figures are somewhat extraordinary. The receipts are set down at £13,700, and cost according to the statement set down here £2,300 to collect, or close on 20 per cent. This, it seems to me, is a most wasteful and vicious system, and the sooner it is reformed the better. A moment ago the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary, in giving one of the reasons why certain reforms to which the hon. Member for East Donegal (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) referred were not proceeded with, or, at least, steps taken in that direction, was in consequence of opposition offered to certain Bills by my hon. Friend the Member for Mid Cork (Dr. Tanner). Now, that opposition of my hon. Friend is not made to the merits of the Bills, but it is by way of protest against the vicious and demoralizing habit this House is falling into of conducting legislation of an important character at advanced hours of the morning.

Vote *agreed to.*

(13.) £22,549, to complete the sum for Broadmoor Lunatic Asylum.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I see that this Vote includes a sum of £9,000 for new building alterations and additions to the asylum to accommodate lunatic prisoners transferred from Woking. I would ask the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary what is the policy on which the Government intend to proceed in regard to lunatic prisoners? There are lunatic prisoners, or there were, at places other than Broadmoor; it is now proposed to remove those from Woking; does that transfer apply to all lunatic prisoners in the country; is it proposed to concentrate all the lunatic prisoners there; and is it supposed that this sum of £9,000 will be adequate for the purpose, and does it include female prisoners as well as male?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Stuart-Wortley) (Sheffield, Hallam): Those removed from Woking are those who became lunatic during the carrying out of their sentences. Under the present system they are a special class, and having been criminal before they became lunatic are considered dangerous. For some time they have been kept in a particular wing of Woking Prison, and for a variety of reasons this has been found inconvenient, and gave rise to doubts whether legally they should or should not be visited by the Lunacy Visitors. On consideration whether or not the Lunacy Commissioners should be given access to the prison, it was found that the subject was attended with inconveniences; and it was thought better, especially as Woking Prison was being reduced owing to the shrinking of the convict establishment, to provide for an addition to Broadmoor, which must come in time, and clear the whole of the male lunatic prisoners from Woking.

Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): These unfortunate people have a special claim to our consideration. I do not know whether they should be called criminals, though they may have committed crime. This is a large Vote, and we might suppose that they are well treated; but it would seem that they are badly treated. We have the male attendants receiving £24 per annum for food allowance, while for the patients, including extras, the amount is £12 10*s.* per head. Now, if it costs £24 to feed a male attendant, surely for the patients, including the extras for the sick, the cost ought to be at least as much; but the cost is about half. This is rather an extraordinary difference, and I would ask the right hon. Gentleman to look into this matter. These are not criminals; they are unfortunate people who have to be shut up to prevent their doing harm to others; and they ought, at least, to be as well fed as their attendants.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): The average cost of lunatics in all parts of Scotland is £25, and we do not feed them very high either, so I do not see how it is possible to keep your criminal lunatics at £12 10*s.* We are doing all we can to reduce the rate under this head, but cannot bring it below £25.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I would ask whether the system of chaining prisoners is recognized at Broadmoor? [Mr. Matthews dissented.] I observe the right hon. Gentleman shakes his head; but I am afraid it is rather from his feeling of humanity than his knowledge of facts. At any rate, I know that in the Irish Asylum at Dundrum the practice was carried out to a horrible extent, so much so that men were chained for weeks and weeks together, day and night, until at last the matter was brought before the House, and I believe that some mitigation of the inhumanity took place. But can the right hon. Gentleman tell us if there are any rules in respect to the use of irons for prisoners, and what authority is it that enforces obedience to these rules?

Mr. MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright): Just one word in reference to the cost of £25 in Scotland. It includes everything, maintenance and attendance, and I do not suppose that food costs more than £12 10*s.*

Dr. CLARK: I think there is some mistake, and probably the total charge would be about £35 or £38. But perhaps by Wednesday, when the question comes up on the Lunacy Bill, we can enter into the matter.

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): I confess I was somewhat startled when the hon. Member for East Donegal (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) spoke of chaining the prisoners. I have no knowledge of such a practice. Of course, I perfectly understand when a man is violent some method of restraint must be adopted—the padded room, and so forth; but I am not aware that there is a practice of using chains. As to the dietary, I have the scale before me, and I need not trouble the Committee with details; but the scale seems fairly liberal, and it includes ¾ pint of beer per day for men and ½ pint for women. The allowance for the attendants is naturally somewhat higher in various ways—for instance, they have 1½ pint of beer, and little differences of that sort. It is the usual allowance for persons in that class.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: A pint of beer a day would not make a difference.

Mr. MATTHEWS: No; I only mention this as an example.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: I would also point out that £12 10*s.* per annum is 5*s.* a-week for the food of persons who are not criminal, and that does seem a small amount, especially when you allow just double for the servants. But I do not wish to dwell on this now, if the right hon. Gentleman will promise to look into the subject.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I gather from what the right hon. Gentleman said that the treatment of these prisoners is more humane here than in Ireland. I was anxious to elicit whether the use of chains was recognized. I am afraid it does exist to some extent, but not to the extent that some 18 months ago it existed in Dundrum.

Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): I would point out for attention the item for clothing these patients. Of course, you have about the same number this year as last; in both years it is the same, a total of £1,100. Now, I have been through many asylums in pursuance of a duty imposed upon me at one period of my life, though I have never had to look after criminal lunatics; but I have been through a great number, and this I will say—that either these people are extremely badly clad, or else there is something extremely wrong about this item, for I cannot for the life of me conceive how such a number of people can be clothed at such small cost. I can also congratulate the right hon. Gentleman on the small amount spent under Sub-head G. My hon. Friend near me takes exception to these people being called criminals, but I differ with him there ; it is in consequence of criminal actions for which they cannot personally be made responsible that they have to be taken charge of by the State. Still, there is no reason why they should not have proper attention paid to them, and I must congratulate the right hon. Gentleman in charge on the small amount actually paid under Sub-head G. There is another small point to which I would call attention under Sub-head A. There you will find the charge for a chaplain, and a visiting Roman Catholic chaplain. Well, it is hard to go into these facts. The noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) has remarked that it is nearly impossible to touch bottom in these Votes and bring to light anything tangible. It is hard to do so. The hon. Member for Kennington Oval—[*Laughter*]—for Kennington (Mr. Gent-Davis) laughs in a round sort of way; but he would do better by assisting in the exploration of these details than by sitting laughing. In connection with this item you have two chaplains, the one, I presume, a member of the Established Church, and you have a visiting chaplain, a Roman Catholic. Now, at the bottom of the page you will find there is provision made for providing for a substitute for this resident chaplain while he is away on leave, and this is the sort of item I have failed to find in connection with any other Vote. Usually, whenever any professional man goes on leave, whether he is a minister of religion or a physician, whether he looks after the mental or physical ills of poor human nature, he has to provide himself a substitute during his absence, paying him from his own purse. But this does not appear to be the case in the present instance—the substitute is paid out of this Vote. Now, is this fair? Is any similar provision made for any other chaplain, Catholic, Wesleyan, Presbyterian, or any other chaplain paid by the State. I really think we ought to have some explanation of this item, which, in a very superficial way, I have endeavoured to call attention to. It is nearly impossible to point out all that is wrong in these Votes; I dare say there is a great deal that is quite right; but I am sure there is much that is quite wrong, if we could only find it out properly. I hope we shall have some explanation of this point I have raised, otherwise I shall be under the painful necessity of moving a reduction of the Vote.

MR. MATTHEWS: I will try to save the hon. Member from that agony. This arrangement is a very old one, and originated in 1865, under a Secretary to the Treasury less vigilant than my hon. Friend (Mr. Jackson). The leave of absence is for three weeks, and the allowance for the substitute six guineas a-week, so that the amount is only 18 guineas. The chaplain has, I understand, been long in the Service, and it cannot fairly be reduced now; but it will ultimately be revised when the question of a new appointment is raised.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): I would just ask the Committee to observe the note at the bottom of the page. The chaplain receives £400 a-year, and, in addition, he receives £390 from the Navy. Does that mean that he gets £790 a-year? He has, I suppose, been pensioned from the Navy, he being no longer capable of duties there.

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): Pensioned after a certain number of years.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER: That is to say, being in receipt of a pension of £390 for past services, he receives another appointment of £400.

Vote *agreed to.*

Resolutions to be reported.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I beg now to move, Mr. Courtney, that you do report Progress. It is 2 o'clock, and we have got through 13 Votes. No one can say that we have wasted time, considering the number and variety of the matters we have dealt with. We have got through Business, I think, with remarkable speed; and surely 2 o'clock is late enough for every reasonable Christian to be thinking of rest.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. Conybeare.*)

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I hope the Committee will not wish to report Progress now. The hour is late certainly; but, remember, the Session is late, and there remains much work to be done. I trust the Committee may find it convenient to go on for, say, another half-hour. That time will probably suffice for the discussion of the Science and Art Vote, for which, I know, many hon. Members have waited.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I certainly do not think that any hon. Member who has waited until now will find this a favourable opportunity of expressing his views on the Science and Art Vote. We are about to enter on a new Class of Estimates, and right hon. Gentlemen will admit that is not usual at this hour. As my hon. Friend has said, no one can assert that time has been wasted. We have concentrated our observations into the briefest possible space. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] Yes; I could myself have spoken 40 times as long as I did speak on each occasion. We have condensed our remarks, I say, and we have passed more Votes than on any previous occasion when we have sat to this hour, and it is too monstrous to ask us to embark on a new class of Votes at this hour. I trust my hon. Friend will persevere with his Motion again and again.

MR. CONYBEARE: I may remark that the right hon. Gentleman has not been sitting here as we have. I am sure I have been paying the closest attention to each Vote ever since we began at 5 o'clock; while Ministers—drawing big salaries—have passed their time more pleasantly elsewhere. Then they return and say, at 2 o'clock, we must go on a little longer, because the work of the Session is in arrear. But it is not our fault that the Government chose to waste so much time over a Coercion Bill; we did not desire that; but if the Government chose to do that they must take the consequences of their folly.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): I certainly cannot agree with all the remarks of the hon. Member. I have myself been here the whole evening since 4 o'clock. I am not in receipt of a large salary; and I feel that, under ordinary circumstances, at 1 o'clock in the morning—and especially on the 22nd August—we ought not to be asked to proceed with Votes in Supply. But I apprehend it is the desire of the House, as I am sure it is my own desire, to bring the Session to a close as soon as possible; and therefore I would suggest that we might take some uncontested Votes. The right hon. Gentleman knows as well as I do the uselessness of wrangling over this matter. My own feeling is that several Votes of a formal character may well be agreed to.

MR. JAMES STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton): I stayed here this evening in the hope that the Science and Art Vote would come on at an early hour; but if we are now going on with more Estimates I do hope that, at any rate, this special Vote will be reserved till a time when it can be properly and adequately discussed. I merely speak with reference to that one Vote.

MR. W. H. SMITH: I have no objection to other Votes being substituted for the Science and Art Vote, if it is the wish of the Committee. But I cannot agree with one of the hon. Members who has spoken, when he says there has been no disposition to obstruct. The hon. Member must be aware that in many parts of the House there is now a great desire to get away, and I do think that greater progress might have been made. I have been in the House the whole evening, and no one has given more attention to his public duties than I have. I earnestly desire that progress should be made. I do not wish to waste time by entering into any dispute, and if hon. Gentlemen will be content to make progress with other Votes in Class IV. I shall be glad to agree to that. There are certain Votes as to which there could be no dispute whatever.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): Early in the Session the right hon. Gentleman assured the House, over and over again, that this Session the Votes should be taken in the order in which they stand on the list. Later on, he agreed that there should be a certain amount of modification by which the Irish Votes would be taken separately.

MR. W. H. SMITH: That was at the request of the Irish Members themselves.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: Then the Scotch Votes were to be separated from the rest.

MR. W. H. SMITH: At the special request of the Scotch Members.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: And now the first Vote of Class IV. is to be taken out of its proper order.

MR. W. H. SMITH: At the request of the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Hoxton Division of Shoreditch.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I think it is very much to be regretted that the Government do not set a better example in keeping order in these debates. The whole of the original understanding has been completely lost sight of. Now, Sir, it is proposed that certain Votes should be taken out as unopposed Votes, in what order nobody knows. This has been tried before, and my experience is that it leads to lots of recrimination. I have never known any such arrangement to have satisfactory results. I think that the objection to voting public money at this hour of the night is a perfectly sound objection; and I shall consequently, on principle, divide against any further Vote that may be proposed to-night.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): The only Vote, so far as I can see, which will probably be unopposed is Vote 9.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): No; certainly not. I shall oppose that.

MR. LABOUCHERE: If the right hon. Gentleman will proceed with that, I shall have no objection. We always have a most interesting speech from the hon. Baronet the Member for the University of London on the subject, and no doubt he has been getting one up for some time. But the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury himself gave us reasons why we should adjourn at this hour. He tells us he is excessively tired, as he has been here the whole evening. I wish to give him to understand that, out of consideration for him as well as for ourselves, we intend to move to report Progress, and intend to persist in doing so.

MR. W. H. SMITH: Then we will take a Division, in order to ascertain the opinion of the Committee.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): With reference to this matter, if we are going to adjourn immediately after Vote 2 has been obtained, well and good. I wish to point out that there are a number of Bills and other matters on the Orders of the Day to be dealt with, so that we can ill spare another half hour for Supply.

DR. TANNER: I beg to assure the right hon. Gentleman that on one item there was not a word said, and that was the Millbank Vote, as to which there have been articles in the public Press. It was my intention to ask the attention of the Committee to that matter; but, at the instance of some of my hon. Friends here, I abstained from doing so, because it was thought that there had been sufficient discussion on that particular Vote.

Question put.

The Committee *divided:*—Ayes 15; Noes 94: Majority 79.—(Div. List, No. 413.) [2.15 A.M.]

MR. LABOUCHERE: The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House has now had an opportunity of seeing who are in favour of voting away millions at half-past 2 in the morning, and who are in favour of a proper examination of the Votes. Under these circumstances, I beg to move that you, Sir, do now leave the Chair.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do now leave the Chair."—(*Mr. Labouchere.*)

MR. W. H. SMITH: The hon. Gentleman knows perfectly well that we cannot accept that Motion under any circumstances. He says we know now who are in favour of voting away millions at half-past 2 o'clock in the morning. Let me remind him that we also know now who are in favour of transacting the Business of the country, and who will give the facilities which are necessary for conducting that Business. I cannot resist the continued opposition of even only 15 Gentlemen at a quarter past 2 in the morning, and therefore I consent to report Progress. But I certainly cannot agree to the Motion that you leave the Chair. I consent to it, however, under protest against the waste of the time of the Committee at a period when it is a duty to make progress with the Public Business. Having recorded my protest, I consent now to report Progress.

Mr. CONYBEARE: I am sure that nobody has the smallest objection to the right hon. Gentleman recording his protest. We are very glad indeed that his protest has been recorded; for we also have recorded our protest against the scandalous practice of voting away millions of money after 2 o'clock in the morning. It is a practice we think it our duty to vote against on principle; we have done so in the past, and we shall continue to do so.

Sir ROBERT FOWLER (London): If the hon. Member had been in the House when the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) was Prime Minister, he would have known that much larger sums had been voted away at a much later hour than this.

Mr. CONYBEARE: Two wrongs do not make a right.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I do not think anyone ever saw a Class completed after 2 o'clock, and a new Class of Civil Service Estimates commenced.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: I will withdraw my Motion, on the understanding that the First Lord of the Treasury agrees to report Progress.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Resolutions to be reported *To-morrow.*

Committee to sit again *To-morrow.*

CRIMINAL LAW (SCOTLAND) PROCEDURE (No. 2) BILL.

CONSIDERATION OF LORDS' AMENDMENTS. [ADJOURNED DEBATE.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question 18th [August],

> "That this House doth agree with the Lords in the Amendment in page 2, line 4, to leave out from 'to,' to 'district,' in line 6, and insert 'the limits within which the sheriff has jurisdiction in criminal matters, whether by statute or at common law.'"

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Subsequent Amendments *agreed to.*

House adjourned at half after Two o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, 23rd August, 1887.

MINUTES.]—Public Bills—*Royal Assent*—Merchandise Marks Law Consolidation and Amendment [50 & 51 *Vict.* c. 28]; Margarine (Fraudulent Sale) [50 & 51 *Vict.* c. 29]; Public Parks and Works (Metropolis) [50 & 51 *Vict.* c. 34]; Settled Land Act (1882) Amendment [50 & 51 *Vict.* c. 30]; Open Spaces [50 & 51 *Vict.* c. 32]; Metropolitan Board of Works (Money) [50 & 51 *Vict.* c. 31]; Irish Land Law [50 & 51 *Vict.* c. 33]; Bankruptcy Offices (Sites) [50 & 51 *Vict.* c. 187]; Turnpike Roads (South Wales) [50 & 51 *Vict.* c. 195].

Provisional Order Bills — *Royal Assent* — Local Government (No. 5) [50 & 51 *Vict.* c. clxxix]; Local Government (No. 7) [50 & 51 *Vict.* c. clxxx]; Tramways (No. 1) [50 & 51 *Vict.* c. cxcvi].

Their Lordships met;—and the Royal Assent having been given to several Bills,

House adjourned at a quarter past Four o'clock, to Thursday next, a quarter past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, 23rd August, 1887.

MINUTES.]—Supply—*considered in Committee*—Civil Service Estimates; Class IV.—Education, Science, and Art, Votes 2 to 9; Class V.—Foreign and Colonial Services, Votes 1 to 4, 7.

Resolutions [August 22] *reported.*

Public Bills—*Second Reading*—Charity Commissioners (Officers) * [362].

Withdrawn — County Courts Consolidation * [294].

QUESTIONS.

BURMAH — THE JADE WORKINGS — CONCESSIONS TO CHINESE MERCHANTS.

Mr. HANBURY (Preston) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether it is the fact that the Government of India have granted a monopoly of the jade workings in Burmah to certain Chinese merchants; and, what information he can give the House upon the subject?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JOHN GORST) (Chatham): The jade quarries, which are situate in the Mogaung District, at the head waters of the Chindwin, about 90 miles above Bhamo, were leased to two lessees for 60,000 rupees when we first occupied Burmah, and the trade was entirely in the hands of Chinese. The leases are now renewed for one year at a time only; while inquiry is being made by the Deputy Commissioners of Bhamo, Upper Chindwin, and Mogaung as to the best mode of making this property contribute to the revenue. The Government has no desire to create any monopoly in jade.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES ACT — THE ROYAL LIVER FRIENDLY SOCIETY.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether the Royal Liver Friendly Society has made a Return to the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies, in which the following sums have been debited to the benefit fund instead of to the management fund, namely—

> "Sundry charges on account of investments, bank, commission, bookage, &c., £49 15*s.* 0*d.*; Syndicate expenses, &c., late inquiry, per list B, £2,037 9*s.* 4*d.*; Legal expenses on account of investments, per list C, £1,763 16*s.* 5½*d.*; Expenditure on Bristol meeting, new Rules, &c., per list D, £3,526 17*s.* 1*d.*;"

whether the Rules of the Society state that 40 per cent of all contributions are to go to the Management Fund, and 60 per cent to the Benefit Fund, and that the above debits are directly contrary to such rules; and, whether the Treasury will instruct the Registrar to prosecute the Committee of Management, or to suspend the registry of the Society?

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.) said, he was desired to ask whether the amounts referred to were charged to the Benefit Fund in compliance with the directions given by the Actuary of the Society, and were incurred in connection with the Benefit Fund?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): I would rather not answer the hon. Member's Question without Notice. I am informed that the first and second paragraphs of the Question on the Paper correctly set forth the facts. With reference to the third paragraph, I have to say that the Registrar has already called the attention of the Committee of Management to the Return; has required the corrections to be made; and has notified them that if the corrections are not made, he will exercise the powers conferred upon him by the Act, and will direct the Return to be registered with his observations thereon. If the Committee of Management finally refuse to make the corrections he will then consider what other proceedings he ought to take.

In further reply to Mr. BRADLAUGH,

MR. JACKSON said, the Registrar had full power to act—and he had, in fact, acted—without consultation with the Treasury.

MR. BRADLAUGH asked, whether it was not a fact that the Registrar did not feel himself at liberty to act without the consent of the Treasury; and whether, if the facts turned out to be as alleged in the Question, the Treasury would give him sufficient authority to defend the interests of these poor people?

MR. JACKSON: The Treasury will raise no objection to the Registrar taking such action as, in his judgment, is necessary.

MOROCCO — BRITISH JURISDICTION OVER OFFENDING BRITISH SUBJECTS.

MR. A. M'ARTHUR (Leicester) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether, having regard to the desirability of imposing judicial penalties upon foreigners in Morocco who have committed acts of oppression on unoffending Natives, Her Majesty's Government will consider the expediency of giving fuller powers to Her Majesty's Representatives at Tangiers to punish British subjects, whether naturalized or otherwise, who may have been guilty of such offences; and, whether any untried prisoners are still confined in Moorish prisons on English claims?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): Without some specification of the alleged offences it is not possible to say whether the British Consular Court at Tangiers requires fuller powers for their repression should any British subjects be guilty of them. The Court has power to apply generally the Criminal Law of England where British subjects are charged with any crime or offence; and a new Order in Council regulating British jurisdiction in Morocco is at the present time under consideration, and will shortly be issued. Her Majesty's Government have been informed by Her Majesty's Minister at Tangiers that no one has been imprisoned at his instance since his arrival; that he has procured the release of two insolvent debtors, and that he had intervened to discourage the detaining of debtors in other cases. He added that there might be some prisoners for debt at a distance from the capital.

EGYPT—SUPPORT OF THE KHEDIVE'S AUTHORITY.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, If this country invited the French Government to maintain the Khedive on the Throne; and, if so, in pursuance of what Treaty was this undertaking based, and in what Papers has the undertaking been embodied or recorded?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Sir James Fergusson) (Manchester, N.E.): The hon. Member will find the circumstances set forth in the Papers laid before Parliament in 1882, and particularly in Egypt, No. 10, of that year, in which is given the negotiations between France and England for the support of the Khedive's authority. The Correspondence is given in full in the other Blue Books respecting Egypt of the same year.

Dr. CLARK said, the Question he asked was, by what Treaty the undertaking was made?

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON: In what Treaty?

Dr. CLARK: By what Treaty—by what International obligation or authority?

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON said, if the hon. Member would take the trouble to read the despatch of Earl Granville to which he had referred, he would find a complete answer to the Question, and see the successive steps by which Earl Granville pointed out that France and England had agreed to jointly support the Khedive's authority.

ADMIRALTY — ALLEGED MISAPPROPRIATION OF STORES AT HAULBOWLINE.

Mr. HOOPER (Cork, S.E.) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether timber property of the Government, admitted to have been appropriated to his own use by an official engaged on the works at Haulbowline, was used for the manufacture of furniture for that official; whether the furniture was made by men employed on the Haulbowline works; and, if so, was their work counted in the time charged to the Government service; whether, in that event, he will order restitution to be made to the Government by the person for whom the furniture was so made; whether the men so employed have been since discharged from the works; and, if so, has the discharge been made at the instance of the official mentioned; and, whether, under all the circumstances, he will order an independent inquiry to be held into these matters?

The FIRST LORD (Lord George Hamilton) (Middlesex, Ealing): I am informed by the Admiral commanding at Queenstown that nothing is known of the allegations contained in the Question; and that no discharges have been made except those necessitated by the completion of works.

Mr. HOOPER asked, whether, on a previous occasion, the noble Lord had not also pleaded want of knowledge on the Question; and whether, on applying to the Chief Secretary, an answer was not given admitting all the allegations; and also whether, under these circumstances, the noble Lord would again address an inquiry on the subject to the Admiralty at Queenstown?

Lord GEORGE HAMILTON said, so far as he understood, the police had no information on the matter.

Mr. HOOPER said, the facts were exactly as he had stated; and he appealed to the Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland to corroborate his statement.

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) said, so far as he recollected, the answer to the Question on a previous occasion was that this official was entitled to a certain quantity of fuel.

Mr. HOOPER asked, if that were so, why notice should be given discontinuing in express terms the practice he had been guilty of?

Colonel KING-HARMAN said, he thought it was because there was some doubt as to whether the timber which was being taken was proper timber.

Mr. HOOPER asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, whether he would hold an inquiry?

Lord GEORGE HAMILTON said, he thought the Question, on the face of it, carried its own refutation. It was very unlikely that timber of this class could be used for furniture, as suggested. It was likely that these allegations emanated from the men who were discharged.

Mr. HOOPER said, that was not so, and asked whether, if affidavits were submitted, an inquiry would be granted?

Lord GEORGE HAMILTON remarked that if the hon. Gentleman was satisfied as to the veracity of these allegations, and would put proofs in his possession, he would certainly consider the circumstances, though he could not promise to hold an inquiry. He would exercise his discretion in the matter.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (IRELAND) — EMPLOYMENT OF LOCAL SHORTHAND WRITERS.

Mr. HOOPER (Cork, S.E.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether there is a Treasury Rule in existence directing Local Government Board Inspectors in Ireland to employ local shorthand writers at local inquiries wherever possible; and, if so, whether he is aware that this Rule is almost systematically violated in the case of inquiries under the Labourers' Act, with the result that serious additional expense to the Government is involved; and, whether he will consider the advisability of issuing instructions to have the Rule adhered to in these cases?

The SECRETARY (Mr. Jackson) (Leeds, N.): I have not been able to find any specific Regulation as to the employment of local shorthand writers; but the Treasury is certainly in favour of such employment, where practicable, with a view to saving expense. It is necessary, however, not to hamper the discretion of the Department concerned by too rigid Rules. I will bring the matter before the Irish Government.

VACCINATION—TRANSMISSION OF SYPHILIS.

Mr. PICTON (Leicester) asked the President of the Local Government Board, Whether the Board possesses any record of a Report made by Dr. Jonathan Hutchinson, in or shortly before the year 1877, at the request of Dr. Seaton, then a medical officer of the of the Board, on the cases of 12 patients found to be suffering from syphilis through vaccination; whether, if such Report is in existence, it is of the same tenour as Dr. Hutchinson's remarks on these cases in his *Illustrations of Clinical Surgery*, Fasciculus vi. page 115, where he treats them as clearly proved instances of vaccino-syphilis, contracted from a vaccinifer supposed by the vaccinator to be healthy; and, whether he has ever had his attention called to the long series of similar cases described by Dr. Hutchinson in the same work?

The PRESIDENT (Mr. Ritchie) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): No Report was made to the Local Government Board by Mr. Hutchinson about the year 1877 with reference to patients stated to be suffering from syphilis through vaccination; and, so far as the Board are aware, no Report was made by him at the request of Dr. Seaton. The Board believe, however, that a Report was made in 1871 to the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society by Mr. Hutchinson; but that Report, as stated by him before the Vaccination Committee in 1871, was made on the application of the medical man in attendance on the cases, and not of Dr. Seaton. The Board are aware of the cases of vaccino-syphilis which are referred to in Mr. Hutchinson's publication. Three out of the six cases referred to in the Question as a "long series" related to single cases, and the most recent of any of the occurrences related took place between 10 and 11 years ago. The Board have the authority of Mr. Hutchinson for saying that though he has been diligently on the look-out for similar cases during the 10 years' interval he has failed to meet with any. In his recent work, published this year, on the subject, Mr. Hutchinson says—

> "There certainly cannot be any difficulty, under ordinary circumstances, in procuring vaccinifers which are absolutely free from risk."

Mr. Hutchinson's experience is in these respects entirely confirmatory of that of the Board; which is to the effect that although 750,000 children have been vaccinated annually for many years past not a case of the communication of the disease in question by vaccination has come under their observation.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—MR. TYRELL, J.P., EDENDERRY.

Dr. FOX (King's Co., Tullamore) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether it is a fact that in the case of a man named Connolly, charged with assault before Mr. Tyrell, J.P., Edenderry, the magistrate offered to release the man on bail if a medical certificate stating that the life of the complainant was not in danger were produced; whether, on production of such a certificate within a few hours, he refused bail and committed Connolly; whether some days afterwards Connolly was allowed out on bail; and, whether Mr. Tyrell will take any part in the hearing of the case on next Wednesday?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said, he was informed that no question of bail was raised when Connolly was committed. A medical certificate, to the effect that the life of the complainant was not in danger, was subsequently produced, and an application made to have the prisoner allowed out on bail. The police, however, opposed the application, owing to the serious condition of the man assaulted, and Mr. Tyrell, J.P., consequently refused to allow Connolly out on bail. Connolly was brought up on remand a week afterwards, and then admitted to bail by two magistrates, the man in gaol not being able to attend. There did not appear to have been anything in the action of Mr. Tyrell to preclude him from taking part in the further hearing of the case.

Dr. FOX: Did the right hon. and gallant Gentleman inquire whether Mr. Tyrell promised to admit the prisoner to bail if a certificate was produced; and whether he afterwards, after a consultation with the Petty Sessions Clerk, though a certificate was produced, refused to admit the man to bail; and, whether the Petty Sessions Clerk was interested in having bail refused?

Colonel KING-HARMAN said, the information he had was that no question of bail was raised when Connolly was committed.

BOARD OF TRADE (RAILWAY DEPARTMENT)—LEVEL CROSSING AT LITTLEMORE, GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY.

Mr. F. PARKER (Oxfordshire, Henley) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether, seeing that a second fatal accident has occurred at the level crossing at Littlemore, on the Great Western Railway, he will urge upon that Company the necessity of either erecting a foot-bridge over the crossing, or stationing someone at the spot to prevent such accidents in future?

The SECRETARY (Baron Henry De Worms) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): The Company reported the accident in question, which occurred to a young child aged two years, and the Board of Trade have also received the Coroner's Return. The crossing in question is an occupation crossing, and the Board of Trade have no power to order a bridge. They will, however, communicate with the Company, with a view to ascertaining whether any arrangements can be made for preventing a recurrence of such accidents.

LAW AND POLICE—RELIGIOUS SERVICE IN STAMFORD MARKET PLACE—THE SALVATION ARMY.

Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether it is correct that five persons are now undergoing imprisonment in Leicester Gaol for holding a religious service in Stamford Market Place on Sunday evening, the 14th instant?

Mr. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.) asked whether the right hon. Gentleman had any information regarding a similar occurrence alleged to have taken place at Winchester?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): The Governor of Leicester Gaol informs me by telegraph that there are five persons in Leicester Gaol sentenced to imprisonment, in default of paying a fine, on the charge of obstructing the highway. They are members of the Salvation Army. I have asked the Justices for a Report, which has not yet been received. I have not heard of any similar occurrence at Winchester.

Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER asked the right hon. Gentleman whether he did not consider that 21 days' imprisonment was far too grave a punishment for the technical offence of obstructing the highway, the real offence being preaching in the Market Place on Sunday evening?

Mr. MATTHEWS: I must receive the Report of the Justices before I pass condemnation, if the right hon. Member will allow.

Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER: I will repeat the Question on Thursday.

SUPERANNUATION ACTS AMENDMENT BILL—POSTMEN'S CHRISTMAS GRATUITIES.

Sir ROBERT FOWLER (London) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether, considering that the Post Office, as stated by Mr. Fawcett, recognizes Christmas gratuities as part of postmen's wages, he will insert a clause in the Superannuation Act giving power to the Treasury to grant an additional allowance on this account?

The SECRETARY (Mr. Jackson) (Leeds, N.): There is no intention to extend the definition given in the Superannuation Act, 1859, of the emoluments which may be reckoned for pension.

AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT—DAIRY SCHOOLS — THE MUNSTER DAIRY SCHOOL.

Mr. M'LAREN (Cheshire, Crewe) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether it is proposed to grant an additional sum of £2,000 to the Munster Dairy School, besides the £2,500 provided for in the Estimates; and, if so, whether he will give ample notice of the date on which this proposal will be made?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The hon. Member will find most of the information which he asks for if he refers to the Supplementary Estimates before the House. He will see that it is proposed that of the special grant of £50,000 to Ireland the sum of £2,000 should be voted as a Grant in Aid of the Munster Agricultural and Dairy National School. He will also see that the sum provided in the annual Estimates is not £2,500, as he thinks, but £2,000, of which it is estimated that only £750 will be a net cost to the State. I have no doubt that ample notice will be given of the taking of these Votes.

AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT — THE CHESHIRE DAIRY INSTITUTE.

Mr. M'LAREN (Cheshire, Crewe) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, Whether his attention has been drawn to the following Resolution passed at the annual meeting of the Cheshire Dairy Institute—namely—

> "That this meeting would respectfully urge upon Parliament the importance of providing for the better instruction of the nation in dairy knowledge and practice by providing the same facilities for technical education in agriculture in the Bill now in Committee of the House of Commons, as are given to other interests, and by making a grant in aid of the dairy schools like this when voluntarily established and well equipped for the purpose of teaching;"

and, whether, considering that the Technical Instruction Bill is withdrawn, and that nearly £4,000 are voted annually in support of Irish Agricultural and Dairy Schools, he will propose an annual grant to the Cheshire Dairy Institute, or will so alter the Regulations of the Science and Art Department that it may earn grants by examination?

The VICE PRESIDENT (Sir William Hart Dyke) (Kent, Dartford): Her Majesty's Government have decided upon the appointment of a small Committee, upon which the Agricultural Department and the Science and Art Department will both be represented, to consider and report upon the subject of grants towards agricultural and dairy schools in Great Britain.

Mr. M. J. KENNY (Tyrone, Mid) asked, whether it was true that nearly £4,000 was voted annually in support of Irish agricultural and dairy schools?

Sir WILLIAM HART DYKE said, he believed that was correct.

HORSE-BREEDING IN IRELAND—THE TRUSTEES OF THE GRANT.

Mr. COX (Clare, E.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, If he can state the names of the Trustees to whom the Government propose to assign the administration of the Fund for the purpose of encouraging horse breeding in Ireland; and if, in view of the fact that the tenant farmers are the principal breeders of horses, an effective representation of the tenant class will be appointed on the Board of Trustees; and, whether the Rules for the administration of the Fund will be placed in the hands of Members before the Vote for the sum required is asked for?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen) (St. George's, Hanover Square): The £5,000 assigned to the encouragement of horse and cattle breeding in Ireland will, if voted by the House, be paid to the Royal Dublin Society, who will act as Trustees for the administration of the Fund. The Society will, no doubt, be glad to furnish the hon. Member with all information on the subject. The general plan which will be pursued is described in the second edition of the advertisement of the Dublin Horse Show now being held at Balls Bridge, which, I am glad to hear, is likely to be a special success, in consequence of the prospect of assistance from public funds. I think the hon. Member will admit that the scheme of the Society is framed in the interest of the tenant farmers, whom this grant is, of course, specially intended to benefit.

MR. M. J. KENNY (Tyrone, Mid): But, as far as the Royal Dublin Society is concerned, is not the right hon. Gentleman aware that the tenant farmers, who are principally concerned in the breeding of horses, are totally unrepresented upon that Body?

MR. GOSCHEN: I do not know how that may be; but I am perfectly certain that the Royal Dublin Society will do their best for the encouragement of horse breeding among the tenant farmers of Ireland. Local Committees will be appointed, to whom all questions will be referred; and on those Local Committees I trust the tenant farmers will be represented.

In reply to further Questions,

MR. GOSCHEN said, he would consult with the Chief Secretary; but he was perfectly certain that to benefit the tenant farmers would be the desire of all concerned. The only object of the grant was to benefit horse-breeding in Ireland. There would be a special Estimate for the amount; and he trusted that hon. Members would support the grant, which was very greatly needed.

STATE OF IRELAND — BOYCOTTING AND POLICE PROTECTION—STATISTICAL RETURN.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If he will lay upon the Table a Return "showing, by Provinces and Counties, the number of persons Boycotted, and the number of persons receiving police protection, in Ireland," on the 31st day of July, 1885 (to correspond with Return, No. 280, of the present Session?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said, in consequence of the short Notice given, he was unable to say whether the Return indicated could be prepared for presentation. If the hon. Member gave Notice to the Government in the ordinary way the matter would be considered.

MR. SEXTON asked, how many of the 159 persons stated in the Return circulated on Saturday last to be wholly Boycotted, and the 609 persons to be partially Boycotted, are included amongst the 1,001 persons stated in the same Return to be specially protected by the police?

COLONEL KING-HARMAN: The two Returns are made separately; and it is quite possible—and, indeed, probable—that some persons who are under protection are also Boycotted. The figures could not be given without local reference; but it can be stated with certainty that many persons under special police protection are not included in the Return of those Boycotted.

MR. SEXTON asked, whether the right hon. and gallant Gentleman would undertake, before the debate commenced on Thursday, to inform the House what was the real total number of persons comprised in the two Returns?

COLONEL KING-HARMAN said, he could hardly undertake to do that. It was almost impossible to do so, as the hon. Member must be aware that there were many persons who were Boycotted and also under police protection, and that there were persons under police protection who were not Boycotted. They would do all they could; they could not do more.

IRELAND—THE DUBLIN POLICE FORCE —TEARING DOWN PLACARDS.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the members of the Dublin Police Force who, within the last two days, tore down placards announcing a public meeting, convened by the Lord Mayor, to consider the Proclamation of the National League by the Lord Lieutenant, did so in pursuance of instructions from the Irish Government?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: There has been no interference whatever by the Dublin police with the placards referred to, save in one instance, where one of the placards was posted on the door of College Street Police Station. The police on duty removed this placard as soon as it was discovered, in accordance with the Police Regulations, which prohibit the posting on police premises of any notices except those required by law.

CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 1885 — EVASION BY KEEPERS OF CAFES CHANTANTS IN ROTTERDAM AND OTHER PLACES.

MR. JAMES STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether it has come under his notice that "The Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1885," is evaded by the keepers of *cafés chantants* in Rotterdam and other places, who engage English girls as singers, and then force them into practices leading to prostitution; and, whether he will request the British Consuls in foreign ports to furnish such evidence as they can obtain with respect to this allegation?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): No, Sir; the allegations in question have not been brought to the notice of the Government, and I am informed by the Metropolitan Police that no case has come to their knowledge. If the police learn that any girls are going to the Continent under suspicious circumstances, immediate inquiries are made to ascertain if the law has been broken and to warn the girls of the danger of going abroad, unless they are fully satisfied that the engagement is of a genuine character. I will ask the Foreign Office to communicate with the Consul at Rotterdam, and at any other port at which the hon. Member may think inquiry useful, in order to ascertain whether any evidence in respect of these allegations can be obtained.

WAR OFFICE—NURSING SISTERS IN THE ARMY MEDICAL SERVICE.

MR. JAMES STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether it is the case that nursing sisters engaged in medical service with the Army are only allowed 15 days' leave in each year with pay; how long this Regulation has existed; whether medical officers get 61 days' leave in each year, with pay; and, whether he will consider the question of granting more favourable conditions as to leave to nursing sisters when on foreign service than they at present enjoy?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): The present Regulation leave of a nursing sister is 15 days, under a Regulation of May, 1885. Medical officers have 61 days' leave, when they can be spared. By a new Rule, which will take effect from next year, the ordinary leave of nursing sisters will be increased to 30 days, and they will be allowed on foreign stations to accumulate their leave.

INDIA (BOMBAY)—THE SALE OF SPIRITUOUS LIQUORS.

MR. ROWNTREE (Scarborough) asked the Secretary of State for India, Whether his attention has been called to the Report of the Acting Commissioner of Customs at Bombay, recently presented to Parliament, and dated the 24th November, 1886, with reference to a combination of Natives in certain districts to abstain from purchasing spirits from the shops of Government farmers, in which it is stated—

> "The question for decision is, shall we sit quiet and allow the movement to continue and to spread, and thereby to forfeit a large amount of revenue, or are measures to be adopted which will bring the people to their senses;"

and, whether the Government proposes to take any action with regard to this Report?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JOHN GORST) (Chatham): My attention has been called to the Report, and also to the Official Statement of the views and attitude of the Government of Bombay, expressed on January 22, 1887, in these words—

> "The temperance movement, as it is called, no doubt affects the Revenue of Government; but Government views the movement, so far as it is a genuine movement in favour of temperance, with satisfaction, feeling sure that it will be repaid for any loss of Revenue by the increased prosperity of its subjects. It is to be feared, however, that the whole object of the

movement is to induce the Government to reduce the tax on toddy, and thus to make liquor cheaper and so promote intemperance."

The Secretary of State has expressed his concurrence in the views of the Government of Bombay.

Mr. ROWNTREE: May I ask the hon. Gentleman, whether he thinks that, under any conceivable circumstances, the inducing of Natives to frequent Government spirit shops can be called "bringing the people to their senses?"

Sir JOHN GORST: Well, that seems to be rather an argumentative Question, and I cannot answer it.

REVISION OF THE STATUTES—THE SHERIFFS' (CONSOLIDATION) BILL AND THE CORONERS' ELECTIONS BILL.

Mr. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether, in view of the fact that the Sheriffs' Bill and the Coroners' Bill are pure Consolidation Bills, altering in no respect the existing law, and that the failure to pass these Bills in the present Session will delay for at least a year the publication of the forthcoming revised edition of the Statutes promised by Her Majesty's Government, and will throw considerable expense upon the country, he will reconsider the intention he has stated of dropping the above Bills, and will endeavour to secure their passing in the present Session?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): The hon. Gentleman only states the absolute facts, that the Bills to which he refers are Bills to consolidate the existing law, and to bring it into harmony with the practice of the Courts. It would, undoubtedly, be a great misfortune if the labour and expense which have been incurred were thrown away for this Session; and the Government, therefore, will follow the suggestion of the hon. Gentleman, in the hope that the House of Commons will accept two measures which are distinctly beneficial to the public, and which involve no political question of any kind.

CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDURE (IRELAND) ACT, 1887—PROCLAMATION OF THE NATIONAL LEAGUE.

Mr. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee): I wish to ask a Question of the First Lord of the Treasury with reference to the Returns relating to Boycotting and Agrarian Outrages in Ireland, to which I was referred last night by the Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland as containing the evidence on which the National League was proclaimed as a dangerous Association. I wish to say I have examined these Returns, and I do not find a word in them about the National League; and I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman, Whether the Government intends to lay before the House evidence which will enable the House to discharge the duty placed upon it by Statute of deciding whether the Proclamation declaring the National League to be dangerous on specified grounds of criminality should be continued or not? Does the right hon. Gentleman intend to give us evidence to enable us to discharge that duty?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): It is not the intention of the Government to lay any additional Papers on the subject before the House.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

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SUPPLY—CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES.

Supply—*considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Class IV.—Education, Science, and Art.

(1.) Motion made, and Question proposed,

> "That a sum, not exceeding £278,558, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1888, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Science and Art Department, and of the Establishments connected therewith."

Mr. WOODALL (Hanley): This is a Vote that touches important interests in many parts of the country, and upon which I hope to have some information from the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Committee of Council (Sir William Hart Dyke) before the Vote is taken. At the same time, I think I ought to acknowledge the service which has been rendered to the Committee by the circulation of a Memorandum in reference to the expenditure in this Department, and which has suggested some of the observations with which I propose to trouble the Committee. It is known that the expenditure estimated for in the current year shows, in some respects, an increase in the Parliamentary grant. There is an increase, in fact, as shown in the Estimate, of some £20,000; but it will be observed that that increase is in every particular of an automatic nature, and is uncontrollable, seeing that it arises from the larger appreciation throughout the country of the advantages offered by the Department, and, in some degree, of the better education of the classes for whom the machinery of the Department is intended. The Memorandum of the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President shows that during the past four years the expenditure in science has increased from £49,900 to £78,160, and in the Art Department from £23,400 to £39,500—a very considerable percentage of increase during those periods. The figures go to prove my assertion that the advantages offered by the science and art classes are increasingly appreciated by the country, and that the public continue to demand from this House a larger amount of assistance. The Estimates for the current year, I am happy to say, make a still further demand upon the increase I have quoted; and among the circumstances pointed out by the right hon. Gentleman, there is one which I venture to think is most satisfactory—namely, in showing that the instruction given by the Department is given in an increasing ratio to students from the working classes. It is satisfactory to find that the students of the artizan class have been augmented in 10 years from 81 per cent to 89 per cent of the total number. It cannot be doubted that while these figures, as far as they go, are satisfactory, they do not by any means imply that the provision made by the grant is adequate, having regard to the great needs of the country. They lead us, however, to hope that, from time to time, there will be a disposition to appreciate the character of this work; but we know that beyond that there is a need, and an urgent need, for increased work, and that it should be fostered and encouraged by those who are in charge of the Department. I therefore want to know if there is any disposition at headquarters to give this much-needed encouragement which I venture to think the country requires? And now, Sir, I turn, with some regret, to an observation which it is necessary to make—namely, that Estimates are being taken which to some extent may have a tendency to limit the work of the Department. Certainly some alarm was felt throughout the country a few months ago in consequence of a Circular issued by the Department in reference to a restriction of the number of works executed in the classes to be sent up to South Kensington. I only mention the circumstance because I think the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Council may be able to explain away some of the fears which have occurred, and that he may be able to show that if there is to be any diminution of the number of works presented for grants it will be compensated for in some other direction. I am afraid that the lack of a disposition to encourage the teaching is evidenced from some other circumstances referred to in the Report. We are told, for instance, in this Memorandum that the giving of prizes and the purchase of examples for teaching in the elementary schools will cease after the current year. Now, Sir, the importance of stimulating the teaching of drawing in the elementary schools has been sufficiently acknowledged in a debate which recently occurred in this House, and I cannot help urging that prizes are of considerable value for that purpose. There can be no kind of question that it is of the utmost importance that prizes and aid should be given to the elementary schools in the provision for good examples. Nothing is more manifest than the want of good examples, and particularly of elementary casts. If these grants are discontinued I hope that the Committee will be assured that the schools will not suffer by the change. I observe, in the Estimates, another significant diminution in this grant. In the last year there was actually expended in building grants a sum of £4,900; but I see that the Government only ask this year for £3,000. During the interval, admittedly, that a great deal has been done—which leads to the hope that there is going to be an important movement for providing technical schools and science and art classes. With regard to building grants, it is a matter of notoriety that there has been a considerable struggle going on between the Department and the Treasury. A Question was put to the Government with regard to it by my hon. Friend the Member for Bristol last Session, and again this Session. My hon. Friend pressed the Government very strongly upon the point, and a deputation from my own constituents waited upon the Government since in order to claim the fulfilment of an assurance which was given to them some time ago, and upon which they have relied. I should be glad to hear from the right hon. Gentleman that he has at his disposal the means of satisfying this need in the event of the sum I have referred to—namely, £3,000—being found insufficient. There is another important particular to which I wish to call the attention of the Committee for a moment or two. I speak of the Department of Circulation. There have been for years past many manifestations of growing impatience in regard to the accumulation in the Metropolis of national art treasures. Now, no one wishes to weaken the value of South Kensington, or of any of the other London Museums as places for reference; but the claims of the great industrial centres and the most important seats of industry in the Provinces for examples suited to particular localities are irresistible. Demands have been made that greater encouragement should be given to the Science and Art Department, in order that the system might be made to work more thoroughly and more effectively. I think it is impossible for any Member of this House whose constituency has a museum or a library under the Free Libraries Act, or any connection with the Schools of Art, not to take an interest in this scheme for the circulation of examples. It has now been adopted for some years, having proceeded cautiously and tentatively at first. The examples were once confined to special Departments, and very limited in their number. Nowadays, I am happy to acknowledge that examples are taken from the museum itself, and that very often they are extremely valuable, and are certainly of a very serviceable kind. I am sure that the Committee will view with great satisfaction the fact that although some most valuable works have been taken about the country from London, they have been taken such care of that, practically, no injury has been sustained by any picture or other work of art which has been lent. And here let me say a word on behalf of a man who has had his full share of abuse in the past, but who has gone far beyond the demands of his office in stimulating the interest of the people in this particular Department. To my own knowledge several of the towns in this country owe their museums to the zeal and "go" with which Sir Philip Cunliffe Owen has stimulated them. I very much regret that the grant for examples and for the circulation of works of art throughout the country this year is actually reduced, although the Memorandum issued by the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President states that the demands made upon the Department for these articles have very largely increased. Last year there were 32 provincial museums, 26 temporary exhibitions, and 260 science and art schools to which the Department sent examples and works of art. Altogether 26,000 objects were loaned during the year. There is another subject which calls for remark. I have spoken of the value of the Circulation Departments. There has been growing in the important provincial museums, of recent years, a desire to acquire examples specially suited to the requirements of the localities which are to be in permanent possession of them. Now, Sir, the Science and Art Department has been accustomed for many years past to make grants in aid towards the purchase of suitable examples for the assistance and guidance of the pupils attending the schools, and of late the Science and Art Department has gone further, and has applied the same principle to the purchase of more important works. I turn, for instance, to the Report which was presented to this House last year. A sum of £1,500, if I remember rightly, was voted a few years ago—I think in 1881 or 1882—for this purpose. Last year that amount was reduced to £1,200, and I believe I am right in saying that every shilling of this money was actually expended. I should very much like to urge upon the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Council the consideration of this important fact, to which I do not suppose for a moment he is indifferent—namely, the advantage of the artistic advice, as well as the money aid which is given in this way to the provincial schools, under the guidance of experts like Mr. Armstrong, who is perfectly acquainted with the value of the objects purchased, and has a full sense of their usefulness as aids to teaching. I myself can testify, as far as I have had anything to do with the matter, that it would be a most calamitous thing if the managers of provincial museums were to be deprived of the money now paid towards the collection of objects which it is desirable to purchase. I have referred to the expenditure during the last year, and I may add that Birmingham, Bath, Bradford, Cork, Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester, Reading, Sheffield, and Wolverhampton have all been aided in this way, and I know that during the current year applications will be made for assistance, and very much disappointment will be felt if these grants are refused by the Department. The Government have recognized the need for technical instruction, and they have also recognized—and very wisely I think—the need for the administration of any scheme of technical instruction being left mainly in the hands of South Kensington. We were all delighted to see the way in which the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen)—early in the present year — showed at Liverpool the importance and urgency of this question of technical instruction. The Royal Commission, upon which I myself had the honour of serving, and the Commission on the Depression of Trade have strongly urged the importance of this question. Unfortunately the Bill which was introduced this Session into Parliament in reference to technical education has had to go the way of other Bills which have been brought forward this year. I wish, however, to ask the attention of the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President to a matter which may be worth his consideration. He knows that the noble Viscount the Lord President of the Council (Viscount Cranbrook) and himself are absolutely masters of the administration and expenditure of the Department — more absolute masters than the heads of any other Department. The Science and Art Department bears a remarkable contrast as compared with the other Department at Whitehall. Some years ago the Directory of the Science and Art Department was unknown to Parliament, and I do not think the conditions in which they expend the money voted by Parliament are known even now. Therefore I would make an appeal to the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President whether it is not possible so to revise the conditions on which the grants are given as to accomplish for the country some of the advantages which the Technical Instruction Bill was intended to confer? There was a clause in the Bill which was, in fact, the very core and substance of that measure, and it reads as follows :—

> "The expression 'technical instruction' means instruction in the branches of science and art, with respect to which grants are, for the time being, made by the Department of Science and Art, or in any other subject, which may, for the time being, be sanctioned by that Department; the expression 'technical school' means a school or department of a school which is giving technical instruction to the satisfaction of the Department of Science and Art."

There are 45 subjects in regard to which the Directors of Science and Art are pledged to give grants in; and I would ask the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President to consider whether it is not possible to modify the teaching in the existing schools so as to make drawing and modelling somewhat more practicable? I know that it is impossible to accomplish all that was intended to be done by the Technical Instruction Bill, but, having some slight knowledge of the subject, I would venture to urge that something useful may be done in a provisional way which would make an effective foundation to the larger scheme which the House will probably be called upon to consider in the coming Session.

Mr. ROWNTREE (Scarborough): The hon. Member for Hanley has urged the importance of the teaching of drawing in the elementary schools, and I think the whole of the Committee will concur with him in that observation. It is very much to be regretted that in the interesting Memorandum which has been put before us there should be such a statement as that which is contained in the concluding sentence—namely, that steps are being taken somewhat to reduce the grants to the art classes. I think that that is a very unfortunate indication of policy to be given out to the country when the country at the present moment is beginning to open its eyes to the vital importance of this question as affecting our industries in many ways. Nor is the indication any the less alarming from the manner in which it has been given. I shall be glad if it turns out that I am mistaken in assuming that this is the way in which the reduction is likely to occur. In the Circular to which allusion has already been made, which was sent out in February last, the Committees of the art schools of the country are warned that merely elementary or draft work is for the future to be submitted; but that, practically, grants are only to be given for work of such a standard as will really qualify teachers in the lower grade. That is a very serious alteration. I may be told that the Education Department is recognizing the importance of teaching drawing in the elementary schools; but it must take some years before a scholar in elementary schools can grow up so as to be able to teach art, and in the meantime the grant is to be largely withdrawn. My own constituents certainly regard this intimation with no slight feeling of alarm. A gentleman connected with the York School of Art has written to me in these terms—

> "Considering the new regulation in connection with the working of some of the smaller schools, I could not but come to the conclusion that, if put into force, it would be fatal to many of them. I have also carefully thought out the probable effect the proposed regulations would have on the annual grant to this school, and, so far as I am able to judge, it would diminish very soon about 50 per cent."

Gentlemen interested in these schools of art say that the great difficulty is to induce young artizans to come into the schools. We can get those who wish to become painters, or to take to art as a distinct profession; and I understand that it is the policy of the Department to increase the interest in these few persons, and to decrease it in regard to the many whom we are anxious to get into the schools. The art classes cannot accomplish what we ought to get in the country, unless a considerable portion of these pupils go into the schools, so that they may have their eye educated in their particular trade. As I have said, those who wish to take to art as a profession come readily; but if the art schools are to become a means of educating a few young men and women to start in life as artists, but is to hold out no incentive to those who are to embark in handicrafts, I think it will be a great and serious loss to the community. There is a feeling that the fees required for the support of these schools of art are already a heavy burden upon the few, and large sums have to be collected from voluntary sources. The fees required in this country are much higher than young people of the artizan class can afford, and are seriously felt by young persons just starting a career. I would ask the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President whether it is not possible to do something which may obviate the danger that is likely to occur to the art classes, and whether something cannot be done to alter the mode in which the grant is given? I am quite aware that the number of works sent up every year is very great, and the labour of judging them is also considerable; but surely some means may be found by which really useful work of an elementary kind may be encouraged and stimulated in connection with these schools, which are now doing their best in drawing in the young artizans of the towns.

Mr. MOLLOY (King's Co., Birr): I think that something should be done with the view of endeavouring to impress upon the Department the necessity of bringing art instruction more within the reach of the working classes of this country. No doubt, a good deal has been done already; but I would suggest that useful works of art should be distributed among the elementary schools in succession, so that the pupils in each may have an opportunity of studying them in detail. I am afraid that South Kensington does not do half enough, and that a great deal more might be done in the elementary and board schools. Works of art of a simple character now in South Kensington might be passed from school to school, so that the best of our artizans may be able to avail themselves of them. At present the facilities given to the elementary schools are practically *nil;* but where they are given to those who are able to pay they have been of considerable benefit. I am sure that whatever the cost may be it would be cheerfully paid by this House.

Mr. CONWAY (Leitrim, N.): I think that this Vote is second only in importance to the Vote for Public Education; and inasmuch as the Science and Art Department are likely, from the experience we have had this Session, still further to take charge of technical education in this country, I think it is well to discuss the question on its merits. The primary work of the Science and Art Department is calculated to call into existence among the artizan classes of this country some valuable ideas in connection with such things as designs for carpets, curtains, wall-papers, furniture, and other things, and in that way it will have a tendency to make the homes of the artizan class more cheerful and inviting, so that their feelings and aspirations may be elevated. It was never intended that the Department should compete with the Slade School of Art or the Royal Academy in pictorial or high art in all its various fields; and I am afraid that, to some extent, it has wandered from its primary work, and has been pursuing a system of advertising itself in guide books and handbooks. It has left the track which called it into existence, and has set up as a rival to the higher schools of art. I must say that I myself have been surprised at the effrontery of the South Kensington Authorities in claiming credit for the work of people altogether outside the scope of their influence—that is to say, in claiming that valuable work has been based on instruction derived from South Kensington. The Department at South Kensington claim to have produced distinguished artists, who have, in fact, never studied in the Museum, among them being such men as Mr. Dobson, R.A., Mr. E. J. Poynter, R.A., Mr. H. Armitstead, R.A., Mr. W. Onless, R.A., Mr. H. Pyne, R.A., and even Miss Thompson. They remind me of the Cambridge coach, who annually claimed the credit of turning out the Senior Wrangler, and who, I believe, Mr. Courtney, includes yourself among his conquests. In the Calendar issued by the Science and Art Department there is an annual disquisition on the benefit of Ireland's connection with the Department in the development of science and art. Since 1870 the Department has issued annually in its Calendar a Report from the Science and Art Commissioners, claiming that Ireland is under the greatest obligations to South Kensington for the development of its science and art. As a matter of fact, Ireland has its own science and art examinations, which have greatly benefited the country, and which are quite independent of South Kensington. It is a singular fact that none of the examiners in science and art at South Kensington received their training at that institution. Ireland is well able to look after its own art and science if the opportunity presents itself, and as an illustration I may mention the intermediate education results. The Report of the Commissioners shows that results have been produced far superior to those which have been produced under the auspices of the South Kensington Science and Art Department. With one or two exceptions the Department does not even encourage its own students to work for the higher positions in the Department. It is a well-known fact that most of the officials of South Kensington are foreigners, and when I say "foreigners" I mean persons who have been imported into the Department. There is scarcely an assistant there who can claim to have received his instruction in the Department. And it is unfortunately true that the importation of the military element causes a stagnation of art instruction at South Kensington. This can be easily proved if hon. Members will look through the literature placed at their disposal. The Memorandum issued by the South Kensington Authorities has been alluded to. I have endeavoured to study it, and in order to get at some of the facts set forth in it I have been obliged to study the Appropriation Account of the Civil Service Estimates, the Annual Report contained in the Calendar, and numerous Papers issued by the Department. There is, I think, a much better means of arriving at the character of the work done than merely reading the Reports of the Department. In my efforts to test the value of the work done by the Department, I took the trouble to compare the Vote now asked for with the Vote that we gave last Saturday week for the Public Education Department. The total Vote asked by the South Kensington Authorities is £438,558, and the cost of administering that Vote is £38,800—that is to say, that the cost of administering a Vote of less than £500,000 involves no less than 11 per cent. Compare that with the Education Vote. The Education Vote, which was passed in this House on Saturday week, is £3,458,807, or, in round numbers, £3,500,000; while the cost of administering it is £217,746, or a little more than 6 per cent. This is an extraordinary state of things, and affords convincing proof that there is something rotten in the administration. What private firm would dream of spending 11 per cent for administration? Certainly a banker who brought about such a result would feel himself considerably staggered when he came to look over his accounts at the end of the year. I am sure the Committee will be obliged if the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President will get up in his place and explain how this large sum of money comes to be spent in connection with South Kensington. There is another matter connected with it which makes the expenditure still more startling. South Kensington only pays for results, and not for average attendance in classes; whereas, in the Public Education Department, the average attendance is taken into account. South Kensington only pays for results, and nothing else, and yet it takes this large sum to administer this small Vote. The officials appear to be far too numerous. The salary of the Secretary is £1,500 a-year. No doubt that officer performs his work well; but in the Civil Service Estimates he is also put down as Director of Science, for which, however, he receives no salary. Sir Philip Cunliffe Owen has a salary of £950 as Director and a residence, and the salary of Director is, I find, spread over other officials. The assistant gets £100, and the chief clerk £100, and I have been able to trace the history of an upper clerk, who receives £400 a-year, from the foot-notes attached to the accounts. We have Directors in one part of the establishment and Directors in another. Indeed, the offices are so multiplied that they produce something akin to bewilderment when we come to inquire into the salaries. In 1882 the Director of Art was appointed Visitor—a new office altogether in connection with South Kensington. Mr. Poynter receives £500 a-year for occupying that position, and when the Visitor was appointed there was another gentleman pitchforked into Mr. Poynter's position—Mr. Armstrong—over the heads of Mr. Bowler, the Assistant Director and others. The record of Mr. Armstrong is absolutely *nil.* I have heard it said that he once exhibited a picture in the Grosvenor Gallery; but as to what it was I know nothing. He has no record whatever in connection with science and art. This is the character of the work done at South Kensington, and, in looking over the annual accounts, I find no less than three pages filled with items of extra remuneration. More than £8,000 appears to be given to the officials of South Kensington over and above the salaries specified in the Civil Service Estimates. That, I think, is a most extraordinary state of things. A regular staff of examiners ought to be appointed without these items for extra remuneration. The duties must be very light indeed, for I find that an examiner, after spending two or three hours at South Kensington, is able to take a jaunt into the country, and to receive this extra remuneration for it. It shows how the money goes, and how the 11 per cent which is spent for administration is employed. Now that attention has been directed to the matter, I trust that there will be some reform of the administration of South Kensington. This is the natural history of an upper clerk at South Kensington. He is appointed at a salary of £400; presently he is asked to examine evening schools, for which he receives additional remuneration, together with his travelling expenses. He is also Lecturer on Irish Lace, and he reports upon the progress made in the lace trade, receiving £52 10*s.* for doing so. He gets further £50 a-year for compiling a catalogue, and he has been made Inspector of Irish Lace at £200 a-year. This is what goes on at South Kensington, and it was only by going through the Report of the Department page by page that I was able to get at the truth. In January, 1887, Mrs. Power Lalor was appointed to inspect the lace; but Mr. Alan Cole—this upper clerk—has since been rewarded with the Inspectorship and £200 a-year. Under all the circumstances, I think I am justified in moving the reduction of the Vote by this gentleman's salary, *plus* the £100 given to the Directer and £100 for a clerk—making £400 in all.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £278,158, be granted for the said Services."—(*Mr. Conway.*)

Mr. CAVENDISH BENTINCK (Whitehaven): May I ask whether the Vote is to be discussed generally, or only the Amendment?

The CHAIRMAN: I think the discussion ought to be confined to the reduction which has been moved by the hon. Member.

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): May I ask whether the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President intends to offer any defence of the Department either now or hereafter?

Mr. WOODALL: I hope the Committee will be favoured with the views of the Irish Members as to the value of the work done by Alan Cole, to whom reference has been made. I know that it is extremely important to help industry in Ireland, and it is, perhaps, unimportant whether a particular clerk has been promoted from a former position to the charge of a department. The question for the Committee to consider is whether he does his duty satisfactorily, and whether the outcome of his work is beneficial. I believe that the result of Mr. Cole's efforts, in collecting examples of lace and in disseminating information, has been that some Continental buyers now go to Ireland, and that some Irish lace goes to Paris, and finds its way to the American markets.

The VICE PRESIDENT of the COUNCIL (Sir William Hart Dyke) (Kent, Dartford): With regard to the particular points raised by the hon. Member for North Leitrim (Mr. Conway), I do not intend to follow the hon. Member who has moved the reduction of the Vote in discussing the conduct of the authorities at South Kensington. With regard to Mr. Alan Cole, he has done very good work in Ireland in connection with the Irish lace industries; but the Lace Inspector appointed is not Mr. Alan Cole, but Mrs. Power Lalor. The appointment was made by the Lord Lieutenant.

Mr. M. J. KENNY (Tyrone, Mid): I do not think it would be worth while to pursue this matter to a Division, although I think it was well to call attention to the appointment of Mr. Alan Cole over the head of Nrs. Lalor. I understand that this gentleman—Mr. Cole—is a conscientious public servant, and I have no reason to doubt that he is, from all I have heard from all parts of Ireland in which he has had work to discharge.

Mr. HOOPER (Cork, S.E.): As a member of the Cork School of Art I should like to say a word. I certainly consider that Mr. Alan Cole has done good service in Ireland in connection with the lace industry. If one thing is more wanted in Ireland than another it is encouragement of the small industries. It would, in my opinion, be very unfortunate if some expression of opinion is not given with regard to the value of Mr. Cole's work. Mr. Cole has been most anxious to further the development of new designs for Irish lace, which is a matter of enormous importance to the industry. Mr. Cole has travelled throughout the country delivering lectures, which had been of great service. I have met Mr. Cole, and heard his lectures, and I know the value of his services.

The SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES (Sir Henry Holland) (Hampstead): I trust the hon. Member for North Leitrim (Mr. Conway) will withdraw the Motion. While I had the honour to be Vice President of the Council, I received several Reports from Mr. Cole, and I can only say that he is doing good work, and that he is forwarding this lace industry in Ireland in every shape and form.

Mr. FLYNN (Cork, N.): The object of the Motion of my hon. Friend was to draw attention to the appointment of Mr. Cole, not so much for the purpose of condemning Mr. Cole himself and the good and valuable work he is doing for Ireland, but to the peculiar position he is placed in at South Kensington. I am well acquainted with the art schools of Ireland, and especially those in connection with South Kensington, and I entirely express concurrence in the views of the hon. Member for Mid Tyrone (Mr. M. J. Kenny) and South Cork (Mr. Hooper) as to the opinion held by the Irish people in reference to the amount of practical work Mr. Alan Cole has already succeeded in doing. He has succeeded in putting upon a firm basis an industry which was languishing from want of artistic taste. That, however, does not necessarily show that Mrs. Power Lalor has not been unjustifiably superseded. She has also a knowledge of the lace industry and designs. I should be sorry to express any opinion as to the merits of Mr. Cole; on the contrary, it is certainly the opinion of all who are acquainted with his work that he has rendered good and valuable service. I hope my hon. Friend will not press the Amendment.

Mr. CONWAY: Just a word or two by way of explanation. I said nothing about the abilities of Mr. Alan Cole; but I mentioned his case as an illustration of the way in which matters are conducted in South Kensington. My contention was that he should not be employed in Ireland, but at South Kensington, where he receives a salary of £400 a-year. I think the administration of South Kensington demands further information than we have yet received.

Sir WILLIAM HART DYKE: I should have been out of Order in dealing with the whole question of South Kensington on the Motion of the hon. Member. I was tied down to the one particular point raised in the Motion.

Mr. CONWAY: Then I beg to withdraw the Motion.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Original Question again proposed.

Mr. CAVENDISH BENTINCK: I wish to take this opportunity of making a few observations upon the Vote generally, and also upon the speech of the hon. Member for Hanley (Mr. Woodall). Now, Sir, I have on many previous occasions, before some hon. Gentlemen now present had seats in this House, had occasion to criticize the mode in which the South Kensington Museum was administered; but I am bound to say that after a lapse of many years I have come to the conclusion that, upon the whole, the work there is carried out as satisfactorily as it is possible to be. I do not concur in the strictures which have been passed by the hon. Member for North Leitrim (Mr. Conway) upon the mode in which the salaries are paid. I understood the hon. Member to complain of the salary paid to the Art Director. On that point I join issue with him, for as everyone knows, with such duties as are attached to the office of Director of the Museum, it would be impossible to have a Museum of Art so beautiful in itself and so full of good examples if the Managing Director was required to turn his attention to other things. Having some acquaintance with foreign art museums, I can say, without fear of contradiction, that there are few museums on the Continent which are more satisfactory in their artistic results than South Kensington. I believe that the art specimens collected under the reign of the late Mr. Cole, and especially under Sir I. C. Robinson, would realize a greater price than those at which they were acquired for the nation. I have had occasion from time to time, and even as lately as the year before last, to find fault with the mode in which parts of the work has been carried on; but these occasions have been exceptional, and I do not see the slightest shadow of a reason for in any way reducing or interfering with the salary of the Art Director. Having said so much on the general question, I will now address myself to what fell from the hon. Member for Hanley. The hon. Gentleman found fault with the Government in the first instance, because they had, to a certain extent, diminished the circulation of objects, and had also diminished the power of the Museum to purchase them. I agree with him that it is greatly to be lamented that the Treasury should be so parsimonious in the matter. I think it is much to be deplored that Her Majesty's Government should have diminished the Vote; but in regard to the reproduction and circulation of objects of art and the power of purchase, I cannot say that I altogether concur with the hon. Member as to the power of purchase which he proposes to place in the hands of the directors of Provincial museums. My own idea is that the power given to a public official, unless he has shown that he has absolute capacity for such an office, should be very much circumscribed. I believe that this power is controlled to some extent by the Department over which my right hon. Friend (Sir William Hart Dyke) so ably presides, and I understand that when power is given to Provincial museums to purchase, the objects to be acquired are restricted to reproductions. We have been told in this House, and by writers in the Press, that the exhibition of works of art at South Kensington should improve the minds of the artizan class; but I think this class will derive very little benefit by merely looking at things the merits of which few people understand. In my judgment, there is one principal branch of instruction which should be given to that class, and that is an explanation of the principles of the Old Masters. When I go to a Provincial town I generally visit the school of art; but I am sorry to say that, instead of finding in the school itself a real work of art, it is generally one of the most hideous buildings that can possibly be conceived. Not long ago I was at Brighton, and I saw there a school of art the façade of which, if I may be allowed to call it so, was a positive disgrace to the inventor, and had no originality or merit whatever. I would ask my right hon. Friend to impress on the officials in his Department the necessity of teaching, among other things in the school, the principles of the Old Masters, whether in matters of building or even as applied to furniture. Now, is there anything unreasonable in this suggestion? Let me direct the attention of my right hon. Friend to the works of the late Mr. Chippendale. He was a cabinet maker, living in St. Martin's Lane, and the pieces of furniture which he manufactured were beautiful works of art. He published a book of designs and commenced the preface with a treatise on the five orders of architecture, and another upon perspective, because he laid down that no person was fit to be a cabinet maker unless he had a competent knowledge of these two subjects. It would, I think, be of much advantage if a similar course were taken by our schools of art. I should like to see everyone who enters a school of art taught the principles of art, which guided ever branch, before the commencement all the Old Masters and workers of what- of the present century, and he would go out a very different person from what he was when he entered the school. I observe that during the past year the sum of £7,000 has been expended on the Art Collection; but the Report of the Director of the Science and Art Department, with the details of purchases, ought to be furnished to every Member of the House in the ordinary form, instead of being left to be obtained at the Sale Paper Office—in order to inform us what these purchases were. In the Annual Report of the National Gallery every purchase is fully described, and I would suggest that in the same way a clear and distinct description of every work of art purchased for the Science and Art Departments should be published in the Annual Report.

MR. HAYES FISHER (Fulham): I should like to draw attention to a grievance which is complained of by the staff of messengers and attendants of the Science and Art Department—namely, that the rules governing their sick pay, which have been in operation for years, have been withdrawn, and that they are now subjected to rules of a much less favourable character. I am told that a man who has served for 20 years as a messenger in the Department is only entitled to the same amount of sick pay as the man who has served 12 months. I do not think that the principle of cumulative sick pay works well at all, and I would urge that these messengers and attendants should be entitled to 10 days' pay for every 10 years they have served. In regard to superannuation, they ought to be placed on the same footing as those who are doing similar work in the British Museum and other Departments.

MR. WOODALL: With the indulgence of the Committee, I should like to state more clearly my contention in regard to aid in the purchase of examples—the subject which was referred to by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Whitehaven (Mr. Cavendish Bentinck). I stated correctly that the original Vote for this purpose was £1,500 a-year; but last year it was reduced to £1,200, and this year it has disappeared altogether. The Report shows—and this is a matter which I did not quite accurately state—that between 1882 and 1886 there was expended altogether a sum of £10,000, of which a considerable portion came from the Department. I should like to have some satisfactory explanation upon this matter from the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President.

MR. CONYBEARE: I wish to make one or two observations on the work of the Geological Department, with respect to the geological survey. I believe it is understood that the Government have reconsidered their original intention of continuing the survey on a large scale in Ireland. I hope to have some satisfactory assurance on that subject, because I have had applications from different parts of the country urging me to press the matter upon the Government. What I want more particularly to mention and to ask the Government for information upon is the administration of the Geological Museum in Jermyn Street. I have no desire to make any complaint of the administration or otherwise; but I thought to point out that we do not seem to be doing as much for a development of geological knowledge in this country as is being done by other countries. The Mining School of Geological Instruction in Paris corresponds with our Geological Museum in Jermyn Street; but in Paris they have gallery after gallery full of splendidly-arranged collections illustrating the geological conformation of the country. I would suggest to the Government that it would be exceedingly useful if such a complete collection can be gradually established in this country. It is done systematically in France; and although its full development would require a much larger Museum than we now possess, the importance of the matter established in connection with the mining industry of the country is so great, that I think it is desirable, if possible, to do something in the course of the present year. Then, again, in connection with that matter, I wish to draw the attention of the Committee to the very meagre condition of our geological surveys as compared with those of other countries. I have tried to ascertain if there are any larger or more extensive geological maps than the ordinary maps we possess, and I am assured that there are none. In America they have most magnificently-developed maps of the mineral lodes. I do not know whether hon. Members have ever seen the great map of the Comstock lode, and the magnificent scale on which the mineral lodes are illustrated and developed by diagrams. Very much more is done by the American Department of Geology than is done here. I am sure that nothing would tend more to assist the development of our mineral industries of the country than that we should have a geological survey here on a similar scale to that in America. Of course, I am fully aware that all these things cost money. Of course they do; but the more money that is spent in this direction would be far better for the interests of the country than the useless expenditure of money which now goes on. I have no desire to complain of anything connected with the Geological Museum as far as I am acquainted with it; but these matters are of the highest practical importance, and I think it is absolutely necessary that the Department should keep them in view, and see if something in the same direction cannot be established in this country. As to the question of models in the Jermyn Street Museum, I am happy to say upon that point the Museum contrasts favourably with that in Paris, where the mining models have not yet been got into proper working order and arrangement. It certainly appears to me that the amount of money we spend in connection with specimens for the Museum, books for the library, and for mining models, is very small compared with the amount expended in salaries and other matters. On page 358 of the Estimate hon. Members will see that the whole sum set down for specimens in the Museum and books in the library is £250, and £200 for the construction of mining models. It appears to me that we might afford a larger sum than that for a matter which is certainly of considerable importance. It is quite impossible to teach engineering properly until we have mining models. I should very much like to see in the Estimates another year a much larger sum set apart for these purposes.

Sir WILLIAM HART DYKE: I have no reason to complain of the length to which this discussion has been carried, although a very large field has been traversed. I hope hon. Members will not think me discourteous if I do not allude specifically to all the subjects which have been mentioned, seeing they are so numerous that it is difficult to carry all of them in one's head. As to the remarks of the hon. Member for Camborne (Mr. Conybeare), I think that they are worthy of consideration; but, at the same time, I would point out that there is a very perfect geological collection at the Jermyn Street Museum. With regard to the question of survey, it must be remembered that in this country we have not the same scope as in America, where there is an enormous field of unexplored country, although I fully admit that we cannot have too perfect a survey in this small Island of ours.

Mr. CONYBEARE: I made no complaint of the land not having been surveyed, but of the scale of the survey. In America they have a survey on something like a 25-inch scale.

Sir WILLIAM HART DYKE: With regard to the question which has been raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Fulham (Mr. Hayes Fisher), while I am quite prepared to admit that there is much to be said upon it, I can only assure him that it is entirely a Treasury matter. If I can see an opportunity of remedying what I do admit, to a certain extent, to be a grievance, I shall be glad to do so. My right hon. Friend the Member for Whitehaven (Mr. Cavendish Bentinck) has made some general remarks upon the Department in which I am disposed to concur, and my right hon. Friend concluded with an appeal to me for general information. Now, I think that there is a certain amount of modified information in the Reports, although I am afraid that a good deal of information is omitted in order to keep the Reports themselves within proper bounds. Some very hostile remarks have been made by the hon. Member for North Leitrim (Mr. Conway) with regard to the administration of the Science and Art Department. As far as I am myself concerned, I am by no means indisposed to have a discussion of this nature, and I have purposely laid upon the Table a statement of the grants to the Science and Art Department for the last few years as a challenge to hon. Members, in order that they may discuss tho question and take more interest in it. I think it is regrettable that hitherto the Vote should have been taken *sub silentio.* Considering the sums that are yearly spent upon the Science and Art Department, I think hon. Members have a right to criticize not only the results, but the administration of the Department itself. I welcome this criticism, although I cannot agree with all that has been said; but I consider that it is good for the Department itself. With regard to the question of salaries, it must be remembered that the officers to whom allusion has been made had to have special gifts, for which it is necessary to pay, and you pay more than it would otherwise be necessary to pay. The hon. Member for North Leitrim has pointed out that the cost of the administration in the case of the Science and Art Department is 11 per cent of the total administration, whereas in administering public education it is only 6 per cent; but the hon. Member forgets that we have museums to look after, and that the work of guarding museums is a much more expensive thing than the administrative work at Whitehall. The cost of the British Museum, from similar reasons, is about 15 per cent of the sum voted. As to the South Kensington Department, whatever its demerits may be, as far as the results go, it has been able to give a good account of itself. The hon. Member has referred, among other things, to the appointment of Mr. Poynter, and has stated that that gentleman receives a salary of £500. As a matter of fact, the maximum salary is £100. A great variety of topics have been touched upon in the course of this discussion, and I am quite prepared to admit their importance; but as far as I am concerned, and the power of the Science and Art Department, I have to make the reply that we have to deal with the material at our disposal. We regret having to make restrictions, and we wish to make the Department as useful and as perfect as possible; but it must be borne in mind that there are many hon. Members in this House who are disposed to think that we are paying a very large sum indeed for this Department at South Kensington. Hon. Members must remember that I am, to a certain extent, between two fires. There are those who would like to see a large sum allotted to South Kensington, while others are disposed to criticize the expenditure in a hostile sense. A point of very great interest has been raised with regard to the circulation of different objects of art specimens, with regard to which there has been a Motion on the Paper for some time. The question is one of some difficulty. In the first instance, we are met with the difficulty of accommodation at South Kensington. We have only accommodation for a certain number of these specimens; and as these objects are circulated for periods, in some instances, of not more than three months, it is necessary to keep their places vacant. The difficulty thus arises of finding extra accommodation. It has been suggested that there should be a certain set of inferior specimens for lending out. I do not think that that would be a wise system; if we are to send out specimens at all, we should send the best. By adopting any other course we should do more harm than good, and would, undoubtedly, give rise to great dissatisfaction. There is an increasing demand for these specimens, and I hope next year, by making small economies in different directions, to reproduce this item in the Votes, which we have this year been obliged to discontinue. Allusion has been made to the question of building grants, and to the fact that there is a considerable diminution in the Estimates this year with regard to these grants. Here, again, I must make the observation that the question is one of expenditure. I am most anxious that this question should be considered, and I hope that next year proper arrangements will be made with regard to it with Her Majesty's Treasury. Another matter which has been referred to is the alteration of the scale of payment to art classes. The scale of payment has been altered, and I hope that in the different localities greater encouragement will thus be given to the better kind of work. Elementary or rough works will no longer be considered in awarding payments on results; but the payments on personal examinations have been increased. There is no desire on the part of the Department to shirk criticism, and I have to thank hon. Gentlemen for the suggestions they have made. I believe that I have now travelled over most of the points which have been touched upon in the course of the discussion. I can only say, in regard to the Vote—which I hope the Committee will now consent to pass—that I believe the discussion we have had to-day will bear very good fruit. As I have said before, it has been too often the custom to pass the Vote *sub silentio* in the small hours of the morning. I can assure hon. Members that I am most grateful for the criticism that has taken place.

Mr. WOODALL: The right hon. Gentleman the Vice President has not referred to the question of technical education.

Mr. MOLLOY: Will the right hon. Gentleman also take into consideration the proposition I made as to lending works of art upon a wider scale?

Sir WILLIAM HART DYKE: Every opportunity will be taken for the circulation of works of art as widely as possible. In regard to the teaching of science in the elementary schools, that is a very large question, and I am afraid that we do not possess the materials for dealing with it, although I hope, seeing the growing interest taken in it, that it may be possible to do so before long. It is a large question, and was approached by me the other night. I can make no absolute pledge; but I will promise that the subject shall receive the best consideration. I believe that, by a small sacrifice of the public funds, something may be done. During the last few days I have been giving the subject my most careful consideration.

Mr. JAMES STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton): I am quite sure that the right hon. Gentleman is desirous of improving the Department under his care as much as possible. Therefore I will call his attention to a point which I think has been somewhat overlooked—namely, the expense of management, which I feel certain the right hon. Gentleman is desirous, if possible, of reducing. Some very important points have been brought forward by the hon. Gentleman the Member for North Leitrim (Mr. Conway). The right hon. Gentleman gave, as part of the reason of the heavy expenditure upon the administration, the existence of a considerable number of Museums and Art Collections; but if he will turn to the other Votes on page 345, he will see that the salaries for such Departments are included in the Votes for the particular Departments, and not in the general administration of the Science and Art Department. Therefore I think the right hon. Gentleman will arrive at the conclusion that the expenditure for managing the Science and Art Department is somewhat too great. I mention the fact in order that the criticisms the hon. Member for North Leitrim desired to make may not escape notice owing to any false security, so to speak, in the matter. There is one point of great importance which the right hon. Gentleman did not refer to, although it is referred to in the Memorandum quoted by the hon. Member for Hanley (Mr. Woodall)—namely, the cessation of the grant for the purchase of examples. I fancy that the passage in the Report refers only to the art portion; but there have been examples purchased also in connection with science instruction. My experience of Local Bodies is that they do try if they can to save money by avoiding the purchase of examples, so that it is desirable the Department should gradually encourage the purchase of good examples. I believe that no money can be better spent by a Department than in promoting the purchase for local institutions of good art specimens. Of course, this discussion has become somewhat more important on account of the probable fate of the Technical Education Bill. It will be in the remembrance of the Committee that the question was urged in connection with that Bill whether French and German should be taught under it if it ever becomes an Act. I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman to take into consideration whether something cannot be done in connection with the teaching of French and German by the Science and Art Department. The Art Division of the Department is something like 50 years old. It was not until after the Exhibition of 1851 that the Science Department was added; and what I wish to know is whether the scope of the Department cannot be widened by including the most attractive subject of elementary mathematics? The right hon. Gentleman must be aware, however, that it would be very difficult to obtain an accurate knowledge of practical science without a knowledge of French and German. He must also know that at the present moment the teaching of foreign languages is greatly discouraged in our schools, and I think he will admit that in carrying out any system of practical art it will be necessary to teach foreign languages.

MR. NOLAN (Louth, N.): I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman what becomes of the specimens sent into the Art Schools at South Kensington by students competing for prizes?

SIR WILLIAM HART DYKE: I am unable at the moment to say what becomes of the specimens which the hon. Gentleman refers to; but I would point out that the question of accommodation arises in this case.

MR. NOLAN: I must confess that I find some difficulty in reconciling the statement of the right hon. Gentleman with the answer given to my hon. Friend with regard to the Department at South Kensington. I now understand the right hon. Gentleman to say that there is not room for all the specimens sent in.

SIR WILLIAM HART DYKE: I believe the best of the specimens are distributed to different schools. I can assure the hon. Member that I regard the point of the circulation of specimens a most important one; and I have also to inform the Committee that I will do my best to remedy the difficulty, and to promote as far as lies in my power the distribution of the specimens.

MR. NOLAN: I can assure the right hon. Gentleman that a friend of mine would have been very glad to get back his own specimens, but he could not do so. That, I think, disposes of the statement of the right hon. Gentleman that the specimens are sent back to the students.

MR. MOLLOY: There are specimens at South Kensington which can be lent at any time. I believe the prize works are retained, while the others are distributed. I ask the right hon. Gentleman to see if the board schools and voluntary schools cannot get some assistance in this respect.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): It would, I believe, effect a saving of expense if the South Kensington and British Museums were under the same control and management. It has been pointed out more than once that there is between these two Institutions an antagonism in the matter of purchase; and you sometimes find the authorities of South Kensington and the British Museum bidding against each other at auctions, which is perfectly absurd. You will also find that the British Museum sometimes has prints that it does not want, and that the authorities at South Kensington, although they want them, will go and buy new ones instead of going to the British Museum for them. In fact, there is a rivalry between them that is prejudicial to the public, and I hope the right hon. Gentleman will take this matter into consideration, and see if the two Establishments cannot be made to work harmoniously together.

Original Question put and *agreed to.*

(2.) Motion made, and Question proposed.

"That a sum, not exceeding £77,385, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1888, for the Salaries and Expenses of the British Museum, including the amount required for the Natural History Museum."

SIR JOHN LUBBOCK (London University): On this Vote I have, in the first place, to express my regret that Her Majesty's Government think it necessary to reduce the sum for purchases. This is a matter of particular regret to the Trustees, because there are this year a large number of objects in the market which it is desirable to acquire. The Trustees have endeavoured to induce the Government to make the usual grant; but they have not considered it advisable to do so, and it is, perhaps, hardly for me to say more than I have upon that subject. The number of visitors at the Museum last year was somewhat less than in the year before; but, on the other hand, it was rather larger than during 1884. A number of valuable donations have been received within the year, and I think it is due to those who have made them that they should be acknowledged here, both on account of the interest which attaches to them and as an encouragement to others to do the same hereafter. The Egyptian Exploration Fund has presented a collection of great interest, made on their behalf in Egypt by Mr. Flinders Petrie. Mr. Franks, to whom we are indebted for many previous donations, has given a valuable collection of pottery. To the Executors of Sir Walter Elliott the Trustees are indebted for a splendid collection of coins of Southern India. To the Natural History Museum Messrs. Salvin and Goodman have presented a large and very interesting collection from Central America, comprising nearly 10,000 specimens, and the Trustees are also indebted to Lord Walsingham, Mr. Seebohm, and others, for valuable additions to the National Collections. These will be found recorded in the Return presented to the House, and I hope that the reference I have made will show that we really value the articles presented to us, and that it will be an encouragement to donors in the future. The whole number of additions to the Department exceeds 200,000. I will only add that several selections have been lent to local exhibitions, and that sets of electrotype coins have been presented to local museums.

MR. MOLLOY (King's Co., Birr): I am sure the Committee are indebted to the hon. Baronet the Member for London University (Sir John Lubbock) for the very interesting statement he has just made. But I have to call the attention of the Government and the Committee to a subject which has been brought before the House to my knowledge for the last four years. We have been trying for a long period to induce the authorities to open the British Museum to the public at night; but year after year the same half-hearted objections and the same half-hearted promises have been made on the subject. I myself brought forward this question in 1883, 1884, and 1885; in the last of those years we received something like a genuine promise. The Secretary to the Treasury then admitted the strength of the demand made, which was supported by many hon. Gentlemen, more especially by those now sitting on this side of the House. When I point out that the amount asked for is £147,000, and that two-thirds of the whole sum comes out of the pockets of the working classes, as opposed to the richer classes, it will be seen how strong is the case one is enabled to make on behalf of the artizans and mechanics of the Metropolis. Now, the British Museum is a very valuable institution for those who can afford time and money to visit it; but as regards the working classes, many of whose Representatives are in the House at the present moment, and whose support I claim, they have no opportunity whatever of visiting this splendid Museum, although, as I have said, two-thirds of the money which supports it comes from them. Now, the objection that was urged to opening the Museum at night is that you will have to establish the electric light in certain parts, or generally throughout the building. I answered that objection at once by the question, "Why not do it?" Then the reply came from the Treasury Bench—"It will cost money, and we cannot afford to spend it." In 1885 the then Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Hibbert) promised that it should be done as far as lay in his power; he said he would consult with the Trustees of the Museum, and I believe that I am right in saying that the Trustees expressed no opposition whatever, and that they promised to carry out the work if the Treasury would consent to the expenditure necessary for the purpose. The danger from fire having been got rid of by the plan of electric lighting, the Government fell back on the expenditure that would be necessary. An estimate was obtained for lighting the Museum at night. The figures I do not remember, but the estimate was a very small one indeed for the installation; the estimate for maintaining the light was especially small, and I think it was £1,000 a-year; it was certainly not more, and I should not be surprised if it turned out to be less. The cost of electric lighting, such as we have in the clubs and elsewhere, is very little more than that of gas; but whatever the cost may be at the Museum, I say that the working people of the country, more especially those of the Metropolis, are entitled to enter the Museum during the only hours in which it is possible for them to go there. Although these facts have been proved year after year, and although these promises have been made, nothing whatever has been done. The mechanic and artizan population of the country for whom the Museum is of more benefit than for any other class have no more than two days in the year on which it is possible for them to examine the works of art and other objects which are contained there. As I said, we had, in 1885, a distinct promise that the proposal to open the Museum at night should be carried out, subject to the consent of the Trustees, which was then the only difficulty, and which has now ceased to exist. The hon. Baronet the Member for London University has assented to my remark that the Trustees have no objection to the opening of the Museum at the time proposed. I ask the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) if he will now carry out the promise made in 1885? The sole point that remains to be offered as an objection is that of the extra labour that the plan would involve. But I do not see any objection on that ground. We can afford to pay for extra labour in this case; and, whatever it may cost, we are bound to do so on behalf of those who find most of the money for maintaining the Museum. I find that for furniture alone the sum of £11,000 has been expended last year, and that a similar sum is spent year after year for furniture and fittings. If hon. Members will look at the details on the Paper before us, they will see that a very large expenditure is incurred for fitting shelves and so forth. However, my point is not to make any difficulty about furniture, more especially as the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury has said this will come up on another Vote. Where this expenditure goes to I do not know; but while this extravagant outlay continues the Treasury will not find the money necessary to pay for the electric lighting of the Museum in the evening. This is no Party question; it is a question of the right of the artizan and mechanic population in the country and in the Metropolis, and Members in all parts of the House are bound to give this proposal to open the Museum at night their support. But we must bring pressure to bear on the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury. It took me two years to bring pressure effectively to bear on the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wolverhampton (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) when he was Secretary to the Treasury; but I am in hopes that the kindly disposition of the present Financial Secretary will cause him to say that next year the British Museum shall be open to the public at the time proposed; and if we can bring about this alteration, with the support of the Metropolitan Members, I am certain that they will deserve and receive the gratitude of their fellow-citizens.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): While I agree with the remarks that have fallen from the hon. and learned Member for the Birr Division of King's County (Mr. Molloy) with regard to opening the British Museum in the evening, I cannot help feeling that the Museum proper is rather a dull place. On the other hand, I think that the Natural History Collection at South Kensington is extremely interesting to everyone, and I would impress upon the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury the desirability of allowing the South Kensington Museum to be opened in the evening. The buildings cost a great deal of money to the people, and, so far as I have seen, the result of their being open only in the daytime is that they are visited by a few nursery maids and children. I think if arrangements were made to open South Kensington Museum in the evening, that most charming Exhibition would become a favourite resort.

Colonel DUNCAN (Finsbury, Holborn): In reply to the appeal of the hon. and learned Member for the Birr Division of King's County (Mr. Molloy), I am ready to give my support to his proposal, on the understanding that such an addition shall be made to the staff as will prevent any undue amount of labour being imposed upon those who are at present employed at the Museum.

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Jackson) (Leeds, N.) I am afraid my answer will not be satisfactory to the hon. and learned Member for the Birr Division of King's County (Mr. Molloy). I can assure the Committee that, as far as I am personally concerned, I will do everything I can to facilitâte this matter; but there are a great many difficulties in the way, and one of them is the question of the addition to the staff which would be required. The hon. and learned Gentleman opposite, I think, has dealt very summarily with the cost of lighting and the cost of the additional staff; but I think it is exceedingly difficult to say what the cost will be. I understand that some estimates have been made of the capital outlay which would be necessary, and this is placed at something like £17,000 to establish the electric light; and we know perfectly well, from what has already occurred in connection with the British Museum, that the cost of whatever may be done will probably much exceed the original estimates. I am afraid also that the cost of maintaining the light would be much nearer £3,000 than the sum of £1,000 which the hon. Member named; and besides this, as I have said, there would be required a very considerable addition to the staff. I have no doubt that it would be of some advantage to allow the people to visit the Museum at night; but we must not lose sight of the heavy expenditure which would be incurred by carrying out the arrangement. The hon. and learned Member has referred to some promises which my Predecessor (Mr. Hibbert) made in 1885. I am not aware of the circumstance myself; but I will make inquiries, and see whether the Treasury is under any obligation to carry out this proposal. The question, however, is one which will require very serious consideration, and I cannot hold out any more hope than this. Governments are from time to time accused of being very reckless and extravagant in matters of expenditure; nevertheless, it is found that every Member has some idea of his own to carry out for which increased expenditure is necessary. I recognize it as my duty to look closely into every subject that I have to deal with, and try to keep the expenditure within reasonable limits. With regard to the Natural History Museum at South Kensington, that question has come forward, and I may mention that during the year I entered into communication with the authorities of the National History Museum with the view of extending the hours during which it was open. I believe that the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir George Campbell) will find that during the summer there has been an extension of the hours. The question of lighting is much more serious, and it is one that I have not brought forward; the question of expense is one which must be decided by the Government with reference to the whole subject. I would remind the hon. Gentleman that eléctric lighting would not get rid of the necessity of gas lighting altogether, because I know of no instance of persons being willing to trust valuable collections to the dangers which might arise from lighting the place where they are deposited solely by electricity. You must have in every room some gas light, and therefore the element of danger from that cause is not removed, and not only that—the more or less destructive effect which proceeds from gas lighting must continue. I will, however, bring the question of expense before the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) when the Estimates are framed, and it will be for him to decide whether any additional outlay should be incurred next year in connection with this subject.

Mr. MOLLOY: This is the old story, Sir. I am quite ready to admit that the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury is willing to do all that he can in this matter; but, after all, it comes to this—that he promises to bring the matter before the Government. These words are identical with those used by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) in 1885, who said that he had "already promised that the matter should be carefully looked into." Now, what is the objection put forward by the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury? It is that if you have the electric light you must also have gas. I grant that. But what is the difficulty? The Museum in Jermyn Street is lighted by electricity; the authorities have no difficulty in lighting that Museum and opening it at night; nearly every club is lighted by electricity. There is no gas used in them although the old chandeliers are there; there is simply a wire running down the room. But supposing gas is necessary, you must keep a small jet of gas burning which can be turned on fully when it is wanted. Then there is the objection on the ground of the addition to the staff which has been brought forward to my knowledge for five years. I thought I had exploded that argument. There must of course be an addition to the staff, and that addition the people are entitled to have. It is clearly of no use making these appeals, and I shall therefore move the reduction of the Vote by £13,000, the item for purchases and acquisitions. I maintain that you have no right to expend the money of the taxpayer unless he gets something out of it in return, and if you are going to expend £13,000 a-year for these purposes, I shall object to it so long as I find it is of no benefit to the working classes.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum not exceeding £64,385 be granted to Her Majesty for the said Services."—(*Mr. Molloy.*)

MR. ISAACS (Newington, Walworth): I rise to support the proposal of the hon. and learned Member for the Birr Division of King's County (Mr. Molloy), and I may say that I was about to make the same suggestion to the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury with regard to this and other institutions. My opinion is that we should do better to allow the working public to have access to the exhibits in our museums and galleries at times convenient to themselves than to enlarge the number of those exhibits. I may also bring to the notice of the hon. Gentleman that this is the proper time to light the British Museum with electricity, because a tramway has been laid down which will greatly facilitate access on the part of the working population of London to the doors of the Museum. Therefore, I support the proposal of the hon. and learned Member for the Birr Division of King's County, and I further throw out the suggestion that a similar course to that contemplated should be taken with regard to the National Gallery and the National Portrait Gallery.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I support this Amendment because the British Museum exists for the gratification and instruction of all taxpayers, and there is no doubt that the great mass of the taxpayers cannot go there. [Mr. JACKSON dissented.] The hon. Gentleman shakes his head; but if he goes to the British Museum, he will find that on ordinary days the working classes are not present. A working man no more than any of us can be at two places at the same time, and if he has to work for his livelihood, he cannot be at the British Museum. There are two ways in which this proposal can be carried out. You can do it by lighting the Museum with electricity, and opening it in the evening, or you can open it on Sundays. I almost think it would be the better plan to open it on Sundays. Although I entirely agree with my hon. Friend, I think that it is desirable we should eventually arrive at having it opened both on Sundays and in the evenings of week days. Now, one objection that is constantly urged against this is that it would require a larger staff. No one supposes for an instant that a man will work for seven days a-week for six days pay. I have worked out the probable cost, which would be about £2,300 for extra pay for Sundays, and £600 for police; add another £1,000 if you like, and that makes £4,000 a-year. Now, if you spend £147,000 a-year, in order that only the privileged classes may be able to go to the British Museum, and if you take the mass of this money from the artizans, surely it is only reasonable that in order to allow this class to visit the Museum we should vote an extra £4,000 per anuum. There is a Sabbatarian feeliag against opening such places on Sunday, but I think that is dying out. [An hon. MEMBER: No, no!] I think it is, because we find that in Birmingham and similar large towns the museums are opened on Sundays, and are attended by hundreds and thousands of working men. You may say that these men ought to go to Church. I can conceive that a man may go to both places; he may learn a great deal in Church, and, certainly, he may learn a great deal in the British Museum. But you have here to deal with facts. There are vast numbers of persons who do not go to Church, and there are vast numbers who go to the public-house, and it seems to me that by opening the museums you offer to the latter a very legitimate counter attraction. Probably, my hon. and learned Friend the Member for the Birr Division of King's County (Mr. Molloy) will not carry his reduction—we seldom carry reductions here—but I trust that the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury and the Trustees of the British Museum will look closely into this matter, and recognize the fact that the great mass of the public cannot go to the British Museum in the daytime. Whether you say it should be on Sundays or week days, I maintain that the opportunity desired should be given to the majority who pay the larger proportion of this £147,000 for the maintenance of the British Museum.

SIR ROBERT FOWLER (London): I may remind the Committee that when the question of opening the British Museum on Sundays came forward in a previous Parliament, it was opposed by the hon. Member for Nottingham (Mr. Broadhurst); and when the question is again brought forward in a proper way in this House, I shall feel it my duty also to oppose it by every means in my power. With regard to opening the Museum on week-day evenings, I think the proposal to light it by electricity is well worthy of the attention of my hon. Friend the Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson), and also of the Trustees.

MR. LAFONE (Southwark, Bermondsey): I do not think it advisable that this reduction of the Vote should be made; because I would point out that if the Committee agree to it, we should lose the whole sum now devoted to purchases and acquisitions. I think it would be better, if we can, to persuade the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury to give an undertaking that during the Recess the question of what the actual lighting and watching would amount to shall be considered; and then next Session we should be able to take such measures as are necessary for throwing open the Museum at night. I think the object in view is most excellent, but I should certainly not like to deprive the Trustees of the means of making additions to the collections, while, at the same time, we were no nearer to getting the Museum opened in the evening.

MR. BAUMANN (Camberwell, Peckham): We are in this position with regard to the Amendment of the hon. and learned Member for the Birr Division of King's County (Mr. Molloy); it is desired to open the British Museum at night to the working classes. Now, if the hon. and learned Member is accurate in his assertion that the working classes find two-thirds of the money voted for the Museum, I say that the Treasury have no right to refuse to open the building at night. But I must say that the hon. and learned Member seems to me to endeavour to bring this about in an illogical way; because, granted that we want to open the Museum at night, the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury says it will cost £3,000 to light the building, and the hon and learned Member's proposal is to reduce the sum now voted. I cannot vote for such an Amendment as this.

SIR JOHN LUBBOCK: The hon. and learned Member for the Birr Division of King's County (Mr. Molloy) says that he cannot understand where the money goes to that is charged for furniture; but I think the hon. and learned Gentleman has forgotten that we are still paying for the transfer of the Natural History Collection from Bloomsbury to South Kensington. The hon. and learned Gentleman will see, however, that this year there is a reduction of £5,000, and I trust that next year the charge will be still further reduced. We have within this year gone to a considerable expense for cases; and the next time the hon. and learned Gentleman visits the Museum he will probably find a considerable alteration. With regard to opening the British Museum in the evening, it is the object of the Trustees to open it as much and as long as possible, and, without artificial lighting, we avail ourselves of every hour of the sun's light. But the Committee will see that the lighting of the building after dark is a matter for the Treasury, and not for the Trustees, to decide. We shall be willing to fall in with any plan for opening the Museum, so far as it is possible for us to do so; but the course proposed by the hon. and learned Member for the Birr Division of King's County is one that is calculated to defeat his own object. Let me take my own case. I am anxious that we should open the Museum in the evening; but it is impossible for me to vote for the reduction of the Estimate by the amount devoted to purchases, and, indeed, I am sure the hon. and learned Gentleman himself would be very sorry to carry this Amendment. I know the interest which he takes in the Museum, and that he would be the last man to wish that the Vote should be diminished in the manner he suggests. Therefore, I hope the hon. and learned Gentleman will be content with the discussion that has taken place, and raise the question again next year. If, however, he insists on dividing the Committee, the result would be to convey a false impression as to the desire of the House with regard to the object the hon. and learned Gentleman has in view. On the subject of the cost of lighting and additional labour, I may point out that, in my opinion, this would not cost anything like the amount which the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) has suggested.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I certainly hope the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for the Birr Division of King's County will not take the unusual course of reducing the Vote in order to secure for the public greater facilities for visiting the British Museum. If the hon. and learned Member will be content with this debate, I will undertake, on the part of the Government, that the question shall be most carefully examined during the Recess; and if we do not find ourselves able to come to a decision favourable to the views that have been indicated in the Committee, we will give the House an opportunity of expressing its opinion, and endeavour to meet the views of hon. and learned Gentlemen on the subject. We entirely sympathize with the object of the hon. Member; but we have, with regard to the Exchequer, a great responsibility resting upon us, and a still greater responsibility in connection with the extremely important and valuable collection in the hands of the Trustees of the British Museum.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: I raised the question of opening the Natural History Museum at South Kensington some time ago, and I got a promise that the subject should be most favourably considered. The hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) now tells me that the question of lighting was not considered at all. After what has taken place on this subject, I do hope that this time it will be seriously considered; and, so far as the Amendment before the Committee is concerned, I suggest that the hon. and learned Member for the Birr Division of King's County should accept the assurance of the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury.

MR. MOLLOY: I have only one object in view in moving my Amendment; and I accept the offer of the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith), because I think it is a very fair one. But allow me to point out that in 1885 the answer given by the right hon. Gentleman the late Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Childers) contained these words—

> "As he had already promised, he would take care that the matter should be carefully looked into during the Recess."—(3 *Hansard*, [296] 1273.)

The words are curiously identical with those of the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury on this occasion. I have waited two years for this matter to be carefully looked into during the Recess; but I will do no more now than express my strong desire that the right hon. Gentleman will this time seriously consider how great is the injustice done to the working classes, in whom he takes so strong an interest, by denying them the opportunity of visiting the Museum at night.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Original Question again proposed.

MR. CAVENDISH BENTINCK (Whitehaven): If my right hon. Friend the First Lord of the Treasury is about to look into this matter, I may suggest to him a new light in which he can view it—namely, that there are two British Museums, one in Great Russell Street, and another at South Kensington. The hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir George Campbell) has told us that, so far as he is concerned, he thinks the Museum in Russell Street a very dull place, and certainly, comparatively speaking, it has very few visitors—in fact, there are at Russell Street, relatively considered, very few objects which must interest the general public. I would, therefore, suggest that when my hon. Friend is considering this question he should also consider the question of lighting the Natural History Museum alone. I think this arrangement would probably meet the requirements and satisfy the wishes of the general public; because when the Natural History collection was removed to South Kensington the public followed it. The arrangement would also, to a great extent, get rid of the objection on the ground of expense, and I would for these reasons suggest that the proposal should receive my right hon. Friend's consideration.

MR. WOODALL (Hanley): I certainly sympathize with the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) in the necessity under which he finds himself for resisting claims that would involve an increase of expenditure; but, surely, the Committee is entitled to some information with regard to the decrease of the Vote for the coming year, especially as the hon. Baronet the Member for the London University (Sir John Lubbock) has stated that this is a favourable moment for the acquisition of specimens. I find the Vote for purchases has been reduced from £21,000 to £13,000—a reduction of over one-third—under that very important head. The Committee may not be aware of how largely the authorities at the British Museum employ their resources every year for the benefit of the provincial museums. I have the greatest satisfaction in acknowledging on behalf of my constituents the continual contributions of casts and coins, as well as other valuable works which have been made to the collections and libraries in my town, and we learn with regret that these gifts will this year be materially diminished in consequence, as I believe, of the proceeding of the Government. This does seem rather hard, and I am bound to say that the Government are not, in my opinion, to be congratulated on the manner in which they have dealt with this Vote.

MR. DE LISLE (Leicestershire, Mid): It seems to me that if the House votes these large sums of money annually for keeping up this and similar institutions, the London authorities ought to provide proper and adequate approaches to them. Now, there is no proper approach to the British Museum either from the point of view of utility, or of the dignity of the edifice, and I should therefore like the Government to put some pressure on the authorities to improve these approaches. Some houses have been pulled down at the corner of Museum Street, abutting the church of St. George's, Bloomsbury, of which circumstance advantage might be taken to widen the roadway from the Museum to New Oxford Street. If that were done we should have at least one good approach to the British Museum. Having brought this matter before the Government, I venture to express a hope that during the Recess, when so many things are to be carefully considered, some steps will be taken to induce the authorities to make the alteration I have suggested, and which, I believe, would meet with general approval.

Original Question put, and *agreed to.*

(3.) £4,908, to complete the sum for the National Gallery.

MR. CAVENDISH BENTINCK (Whitehaven): I wish to take this opportunity of addressing to my hon. Friend the Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) in a more convenient form a Question which has already appeared on the Paper with regard to the National Gallery. I beg to assure my hon. Friend and the Committee that I intend in no way to find fault with the mode in which the National Gallery is conducted. The observations which I felt it my duty to make not long ago with regard to the management of the South Kensington Museum apply in their entirety to that of the National Gallery. We have on the whole a most admirable collection of pictures, they are extremely well selected, and generally speaking I think the Trustees have discharged their duties to the advantage of the country and with credit to themselves. Therefore, I wish it to be distinctly understood that I bring no charge either against the Directors of the National Gallery, or against their predecessors. I guard myself by these remarks; because in former years when I have thought it necessary to make some criticisms I have found the Director and some Trustees to be extremely thin-skinned; I repeat, then, that I bring no charge against these gentlemen, who are most useful public servants. Now, one of the complaints I have felt it my duty to make in former days was that the Directors did not exercise due economy in the purchase of pictures, and that they were in the habit of allowing pictures to be sold by public auction in England and then buying them from the purchasers at a very enhanced price. Some years ago a picture by Paolo Veronese (the Vision of St. Helena) was sold in the rooms of Messrs Christie and Manson for 300 guineas, to a gentleman who I strongly urged to buy it, and not very long after his death, the same picture was bought in the same auction rooms, for the nation, at the price of 3,000 guineas. Two or three years ago, as I am informed and believe, a gentleman bought a picture of a dealer in London, for £40; he took the picture to Italy, where he met the agent of the National Gallery, to whom it was sold for a considerable sum. I do not know whether this report is true; but I believe it to be so. One defect of our system is that all sorts of authorities are responsible for our works of art. The right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Council (Sir William Hart Dyke) is responsible for the works of art in his Department; the Secretary of the Treasury is responsible for the National and Portrait Galleries; the Trustees of the British Museum—among whom are my hon. Friend the Member for the University of London (Sir John Lubbock)—and myself, are responsible for art in that Institution. In other cases, the Chief Commissioner of Works, and the Home Secretary are responsible, and we have lately heard that a Court official, denominated the Great Chamberlain is, responsible for the works of art in the Houses of Parliament. I wish to see these responsibilities delegated to one official, and I hope some day that we may have a Minister on the Treasury Bench having a knowledge of art who will be able to answer well and efficiently questions put to him on this subject. I have now to ask my hon. Friend whether the report is true that early in the present year a picture of Giovanni Bellini was bought in the rooms of Messrs. Christie and Manson for 120 guineas, and lately sold by the purchaser to the Trustees of the National Gallery for 400 guineas? If the report is true, I think it is a proceeding on the part of the Directors of the National Gallery to which attention should be directed. I would remind the Committee that, two or three years ago, what I think a most unfortunate mistake was made—namely, the expenditure of an unreasonably large sum for the purchase of two pictures from the Blenheim Collection. I do not think, nor did I at the time, that the country was justified in giving that enormous sum for two pictures, one of which (the Vandyke) — although possibly a very good picture—was really not wanted in the Gallery as a specimen of the master. We were then told that there would be no purchase of pictures for some years; and I see, on referring to the sub-head which accounts for the money disposed of by the Trustees of the National Gallery, the following entries:—"Purchase of pictures, 0; increase, 0; decrease, 0." Well, when I refer to the Report of the Director of the National Gallery—for whom the Secretary to the Treasury is responsible—which I hold in my hand, I find that a large number of pictures have been purchased. I anticipate the statement that these pictures have been purchased out of private bequest funds—the Walker Fund, the Lewis Fund, &c. At any rate, I should like to have information as to whether that is the case or not. If the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury is not able to answer the question off-hand, I will repeat it on some other occasion; but I would impress upon him once more that I do not address this question to him in order to criticize in any way the action of the Trustees of the National Gallery, except that I think when pictures are sold in this country, and sold at first hand, the Trustees would do better to buy them at first hand rather than allow other persons to buy them and take them away, and then purchase the pictures from the persons who have bought them at extravagant prices. It is only a matter of attention and diligence on the part of the Director and his subordinates. There is an agency to which the Treasury might subscribe—an agency with which hon. Members in this House are, no doubt, familiar—which affords information on these matters, and which would, no doubt, prevent a repetition of what has occurred in the case of the picture by Giovanni Bellini. The Trustees of the National Gallery, or any private persons, have only to subscribe to this agency in order to receive notice of these sales, and every assistance in informing themselves as to pictures which are in the market. I do not know whether Her Majesty's Government subscribe to that agency; but if they do not, and will take the precaution to subscribe in the future, they will find it will be a great saving of money to them when purchases of this kind have to be effected. I think I have made my question clear. I would ask the hon. Gentleman, in addition to the Notice on the Paper, whether the pictures which I know have been bought by the National Gallery, have or have not been purchased out of the fund voted by the House of Commons?

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I have no doubt the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down is an excellent authority upon pictures, and we are very much obliged to him for his interesting observations upon the subject. He has pointed out that no demand is made this year on the National Exchequer for the purchase of pictures, and that no demand was made last year. I am glad to hear this after the shameful and scandalous waste of public money on the purchase of the Blenheim Gallery pictures some time ago. I am glad to know that Her Majesty's Advisers have come to the conclusion that they are bound to abstain for a few years from the purchase of any other pictures, and I trust that there is no doubt that the pictures which have been purchased recently have been bought out of money left for the purpose by private bequest.

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY) (Mr. Jackson) (Leeds, N.): With regard to the question which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Whitehaven (Mr. Cavendish Bentinck) has just put to me, and the Notice which he has had upon the Paper now for two or three days, and of which he gave me some previous Notice, I am desirous to say that I believe the facts are as he stated. I believe the picture by Giovanni Bellini was sold at Christie's for the sum named, and although the transaction is not completed—that is to say, although no money has passed—I believe that an agreement has been entered into for the purchase of the picture for the sum named—namely £400. I understand the picture is to be paid for out of the Lewis bequest. I believe that the plain and frank explanation of what occurred is this, that at the time of the sale at Christie's, Sir F. Burton, the Director of the National Gallery, was busy in connection with some arrangements that were in progress and failed to see the picture. But if the right hon. Gentleman contends that if the picture had been seen it would have followed as a necessary consequence that the National Gallery would have been able to buy it at Christie's for £125, issue must be joined with him. It does not by any means follow that if there had been more competition the picture would not have brought a larger sum. If there had been a large amount of competition the price might have run up. Because a picture fetches a certain sum at Christie's it does not at all follow that it is not worth a great deal more. The price which you may be prepared to give for a picture by private contract is by no means to be compared to the price which a picture may fetch at a sale. Indeed, with regard to the picture in question, my belief is that if there had been greater competition it would have fetched a much higher price, because I am told on good authority that it is valued at a higher sum than is to be paid for it by the National Gallery. However, that is apart from the question; the picture was missed at the time, and therefore there was no competition for it on the part of the National Gallery. As to the other Question which the right hon. Gentleman has asked, I have already answered it; and as to the Question put to me by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Kirkcaldy, &c. (Sir George Campbell), that has also been met in the same way. I can assure the hon. Gentleman that the accounts correctly represent the grants which are made from the Treasury. I trust that that will satisfy the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. M. J. KENNY (Tyrone, Mid.): There is a point which seems to have escaped the attention of hon. Gentlemen—one which arose on the Museum Vote and comes up again here—namely, the Question of opening the National Gallery and lighting it at night. There is no reason why the same principle should not be applied to the National Gallery which it is proposed to apply to the British Museum. I am quite aware that there is a special danger in this matter, and that it is considered that light at night may have a bad effect upon the pictures; but we must remember that the electric light can be used, and that the employment of gas can practically be altogether dispensed with. There is no need, therefore, to fear that the use of artificial light would have a bad effect upon the pictures. I am quite prepared for the answer that gas would have the effect probably of destroying the pictures; but I maintain that if the electric light is used, the pictures will not be injuriously affected. That argument is, therefore, brushed aside. As to the expense, I do not think the cost of lighting the National Gallery would be anything near as large as the cost of lighting the British Museum. Considering that the collection at the National Gallery is of the highest value, and that the cost of maintenance is comparatively trifling, it seems to me to be stinginess of the worst kind to say that the people of London, and the immense body of people who come pouring into the Metropolis every day from the country, should be deprived of the privilege of inspecting the National Collection of pictures after six o'clock at night. I will not go into the question of opening the National Gallery on Sundays; but I think it would be well to repeat whatever steps are being taken for the lighting of the British Museum at night in the case of the National Gallery, directly a proper method is discovered and its utility proved.

Mr. JACKSON: I think it right to make a correction in the answer I gave the hon. Gentleman just now, because there was one point which escaped my memory. I think it only right to say that a short time ago very serious pressure was put upon the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen), and a proposal was made to him that if he would not give some additional grant to the National Gallery he should allow the Trustees to retain some portion of the entrance fees, and to make some profit on the sale of catalogues. The question was considered, and my right hon. Friend, who is very often more pliant than his Secretary in these matters, yielded to the extent of promising to give a grant of £1,500 this year; and I am afraid that this will entail the presentation of a Supplementary Estimate. With regard to the question of lighting, I dare say that question was carefully considered by those responsible for the Gallery, and I must point out that this question, so far as the National Gallery is concerned, stands in a different category to that with regard to the British Museum. In the one case—in the case of the Museum—the Trustees have shown no opposition to the proposal; in fact, they are willing to do anything they can to promote the opening of the Museum at night. But I believe there is, on the part of those who are responsible for the pictures in the National Gallery, a very strong feeling that the lighting of the Gallery would be attended with extreme danger. Those who are responsible are very strongly opposed to the introduction of light, and to the opening after dark. There has been a Return furnished to the House of Lords—I do not know whether to this House as well—in which their views have been set forth in very strong terms.

Mr. M. J. KENNY: Do they object to the use of the electric light?

Mr. JACKSON: They do.

Mr. M. J. KENNY: Just as much as to the other?

Mr. JACKSON: Yes.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL: The hon. Gentleman says that a Supplementary Estimate is to be brought forward to cover the grant to be given to the Trustees of the National Gallery. Is that sum in lieu of fees, or in addition to fees? Will it comprise the whole sum to be given, and are we to understand that the money will not be expended by the Trustees before it has been voted by this House—I refer to the amount to be voted under the Supplementary Estimate?

Mr. CAVENDISH BENTINCK: I am obliged to my hon. Friend for answering my question so frankly and fully; but, at the same time, I am bound to say that I do not agree with him at all. It is impossible to speculate as to what the picture to which I referred would have fetched under the hammer if the Government had been represented at the sale; still, I contend that it is the duty of the Representatives of the country to be at a sale of this kind to do their best in the interests of the country. What I wish to point out to my hon. Friend and to the right hon. Gentleman at the head of the Government is, that they ought to do their best, in connection with all these matters, to save the country needless expense. If they wish to buy works of art, or anything else, they ought to take pains to attend all the sales, by themselves or by their agents, and ought not to allow what seems to me to be a very large and improper expenditure of public money. It is not the first time that such an expenditure as that of which I have complained has happened.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: Do I understand the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury to say that the grant of £1,500 to the National Gallery will not be given in addition to the fees, but in place of them?

MR. JACKSON: I suppose that this grant will have to be sanctioned by the House of Commons before the money can be handed over. The hon. Member is quite right in understanding that this £1,500 is not in addition to fees, but in lieu of them. It was thought much better that the question should not be complicated by any special temptation being placed before the Trustees to charge increased fees, or to make undue profit out of the sale of catalogues; therefore it was decided to allow them a grant.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: The answer of the hon. Gentleman seems to me to be unsatisfactory in the highest degree. Are we to understand that an account relating to the National Gallery is to be laid before this House, showing that no money is to be handed over for the purchase of pictures, and that then a Supplementary Estimate is to be asked for which may be devoted to that purpose? This point is not made clear; and, further than that, the hon. Gentleman seems to hesitate to tell us whether or not this money has already been handed over to the National Gallery and spent by the Trustees.

MR. JACKSON: The money has not yet been handed over by the Treasury; but, so far as the expenditure on the part of the National Gallery Trustees is concerned, I cannot undertake to say that they have not spent any of the fees which may be looked upon as a part of the whole £1,500. I can have no means of knowing whether that money is expended or not; but, so far as the Treasury is concerned, the grant has not yet been handed over. I hope the hon. Gentleman will not condemn me for having been frank with him. Being anxious not to mislead him in any way, and these arrangements having been made, I thought it better at once to state the facts to the House, so that hon. Members would not be surprised when they heard of it.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: We are exceedingly obliged to the hon. Gentleman for making a clean breast of it, and I hope it will be understood that this money will not be handed over to the National Gallery until it is voted by this House.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): There have been a great many occurrences by no means of an agreeable character connected with this Session, which, at any rate, have afforded us this one advantage, that they have given Members time to go and look at the National Gallery and the National Museum. I dare say a great many of us have very profitably spent a few hours there during the past few months, and I have no doubt that many of us will do the same before the House rises for the Recess. I should like to point out that I do not think the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury has been nearly specific enough in his answer on the subject of the lighting of the National Gallery. What he ought to do in a matter of this kind is not to say—"Oh, the officials are against you; they will not take the responsibility of lighting the National Gallery." That is not a sufficient answer; because the guardians of valuable treasures are always exceedingly careful of their trust—whether they are works of art or antiquities. These guardians always resist proposals for throwing open these museums or galleries for longer hours to the working classes, unless they see their way to extra pay. Extra pay would very often produce very considerable change in the opinions of those who are guardians of treasures of this kind. I should like the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury to say exactly what is the nature of the injury which the Trustees of the National Gallery apprehend might result from lighting the place by electricity. In the case of electricity, you can have no escape of gas, which we know is injurious to pictures. We have not the same heat nor the same atmospheric conditions with electricity as we have with gas; and I should like to know what the guardians of the National Gallery, who, I dare say, are authorities on this point, have to urge in objection to the electric light. I should like to know whether the electric light would have any chemical effect in decomposing the pigments which are used in the pictures? If there is any objection of that kind, it is one which only a specialist could give a sound opinion upon, and upon which even a specialist could only express a reliable view after he had carefully examined into the matter and experimented upon it. If the authority appealed to simply objects to electric lighting, because he is afraid of fire, then I must say I do not think a National Gallery official is the sort of authority to whom we ought to go for an opinion. I would rather have the opinion of the head of the Fire Brigade, or the opinion of anybody at the head of a large public establishment. In the matter of fire, I do not see how the head of the National Gallery can be necessarily a specialist. Of course, this objection might be made; but I should like the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury to state specifically whether that is the reason, and the only reason, why the electric lighting is objected to —namely, that the National Gallery might take fire. If electricians report that there is nothing specially dangerous in the manner in which electricity can be applied which would entail a danger from fire, I do not see what objection there can be to lighting the National Gallery for, at any rate, two or three nights a-week. It might be lit up to 7 o'clock or 8 o'clock at night. That would give immense opportunities to the working classes to visit the place and see the pictures, and it would have a great refining influence upon such people. The Gallery has been enlarged, and it now possesses more rooms than ever; it is sufficiently spacious to accommodate large numbers of people, and there is no reason why, if it is possible, the public should not be admitted in the evening. There is another small point to which I should like to call the attention of the hon. Gentleman. I think it would be advisable if directions were given to the attendants at the doors of the National Gallery to take charge of coats as well as umbrellas and walking sticks. At present there is some inconvenience, owing to the refusal of the attendants to do this. Although the matter is only a trifling one, I think it would be well for the Government to give attention to it while they have the whole subject under consideration.

MR. JACKSON: I had no wish to detain the Committee by reading the Report of the National Gallery Authorities on the subject of lighting; but some objections taken by them apply both to gas and electricity. After speaking of the danger of exposing pictures to bad air and referring to the ill effects caused by gas and heat, they go on to refer to electric lighting, and they say that it has not yet been shown that electricity contains no element and is accompanied by no conditions which are likely to affect such sensitive works of art as pictures. They further state that the light is not under control so fully as to prevent danger by fire on the one hand, or sudden extinction on the other. In the Report it is stated that when the light collapses in a series of rooms containing treasures of art, perhaps, there being a large promiscuous crowd of persons present, most serious consequences may ensue; and the Authorities wound up their Report by saying that the Trustees, being appointed guardians of the National Collection, are bound to draw the attention of the Government to all the dangers that may arise to the pictures under their charge. The Committee must bear in mind that a change of this kind, if once made, would be very difficult to depart from. I suppose if serious injury were done to any of our pictures, and damage resulted from the change, it would be damage that would be absolutely irreparable; and that was my reason for saying that the Trustees objected to the adoption of either gas or electricity for lighting the National Gallery.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I do not think the arguments of the Authorities are at all conclusive. We all know that gas is deleterious to pictures; and I do not suppose that anyone in this House would desire to see it introduced, because; in addition to all the chemical effects produced by the combustion, it would be very dangerous as regards fire. But I would just mention a circumstance which seems to me to leave a doubt as to whether the conclusion of the Authorities with regard to electricity are sound. I think the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury knows, and the Committee knows, that there are other Galleries in London where very valuable pictures are from time to time exhibited which are open at night; and it must be remarked that not only at night that the necessity for lighting exists, but that during the winter months it is necessary that we should have artificial light in order to see the pictures exhibited in these places even in the daytime. Take the Grosvenor Gallery and the Burlington House Collection. I presume it is a matter of notoriety that those Galleries, in the winter months at any rate, contain works of great value that are priceless, not only from the Royal Collection at Windsor, and other places, but from some of the most magnificent private collections in the country. Now, if it has been found that the pictures in those places do not suffer from the effects of the electric light, it appears to me that the timid fears of the Authorities of the National Gallery are entirely without foundation. I would put it to the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury whether he could not have a definite inquiry made upon this point? I would put it to him whether he could not request the Authorities of the National Gallery to confer with those who have charge of the Burlington House Collection and the Grosvenor Gallery as to whether any ill effects have ever been discovered from the use of the electric light? If during a number of years the pictures have been exhibited at those places at night, and no ill effects have been discovered, it appears to me that that is a strong argument in favour of having the electric light in the National Gallery. With regard to the possibility of sudden extinction, I do not think that there is any very solid argument to be based upon that. Why, I recollect not very long ago that the electric light was suddenly extinguished in this House; we did not lose ourselves; and very promptly there were forthcoming candles and lamps. Precisely the same thing happened at the British Museum——

MR. JACKSON: Were candles and lamps produced?

MR. CONYBEARE: No. I remember being there one day when the electric light went out— something had happened to the machinery I think—or, at any rate, there was a stoppage of some kind. No serious consequence such as the hon. Member has referred to resulted; nothing was stolen, no valuable MSS., or anything of that sort. Supposing we had the electric light at the National Gallery, it would always be possible to have a few lanterns at hand, in order to provide against such an emergency as the hon. Member points out. There would be no danger of having lanterns in the National Gallery—of course, under the control of the attendants. I do not mean to say that you should keep them constantly burning, or that you want a secondary sort of light, but lanterns should be distributed throughout the place, just as the police in this building are supplied with them at night, when the electric light is turned off, in order to see that everything is right. It would be perfectly practicable for the attendants in the National Gallery to have lanterns in this way, which they can use in the event of any emergency occurring. It does not appear, on a careful and calm consideration of the Report to which the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury referred, that there is very much foundation for those timid fears expressed by the National Gallery Authorities. At any rate, I think the points I have raised are well worthy the consideration of the. hon. Gentleman and the Trustees of the National Gallery.

MR. JACKSON: It will be my duty to make inquiries into these matters.

Vote *agreed to.*

(4.) £1,116, to complete the sum for the National Portrait Gallery.

MR. M. J. KENNY (Tyrone, Mid): I wish to ask a question of the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) on this Vote. The hon. and learned Member for the Birr Division of King's County (Mr. Molloy) is unavoidably absent, and I desire to say, on his behalf, that he is under the impression that the portraits in this Gallery are exposed to danger from fire; and he wishes to be assured on the subject. I should like to ask the hon. Gentleman if he can give the Committee an assurance that those pictures are as far as possible safe from this danger?

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I desire to ask the same question. The amount granted for purchase in connection with this Gallery is only £435, which is not a large sum for the purchase of portraits of our great men, and I do not think that exception can be taken to it; but I have been near the Portrait Gallery lately, and I find that there are all sorts of inflammable materials lying about it, and that there are numerous workmen engaged there, smoking a good many pipes, and it is very possible for a fire to break out there at any time. I should like to know whether Her Majesty's Government are aware of the danger, and whether they have taken, or intend to take, any precautions?

MR. W. G. CAVENDISH BENTINCK (Penryn and Falmouth): And I would ask the same question. I should like to ask whether any plan has been agreed upon by the Government for the construction of a better building to contain these portraits? Have they any scheme in contemplation?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): As regards the question of fire at the National Portrait Gallery which has been raised by two or three hon. Members, I would merely point out that those hon. Members must have forgotten for the moment that the portraits are not at South Kensington, but at Bethnal Green.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: The whole Gallery?

MR. JACKSON: Yes; the whole Gallery, and every care is being taken of them there.

Vote *agreed to.*

(5.) Motion made, and Question proposed,

> "That a sum, not exceeding £13,800, be granted to Her Majesty to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1888, for Grants in Aid of the Expenditure of certain Learned Societies in Great Britain and Ireland."

MR. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.): I have upon the Paper a Notice to reduce this Vote by £1,000, and my reason for doing so is to call attention to the distribution of the Vote, especially the distribution of the Vote as it concerns science in Scotland. I know that this subject I am bringing before the House is no new one, because it has been brought on on previous occasions. It has come especially to the front during the last winter and spring, through a very powerful and unanimous representation on behalf of the scientific societies in Scotland, made by Sir William Thompson, who is well known to this House as an eminent scientific man. The learned societies of Scotland have placed their views very successfully before the hon. Members of this House, in a Memorial circulated amongst us; and they also on one occasion during the Recess laid their views before the Government by means of a deputation headed also by Sir William Thompson. What I principally contend for is this—I think we might make a case upon the generally unfair distribution of this Vote. It purports primarily to be a Vote for Great Britain, and in a certain degree for the United Kingdom; and I think that if one casts one's eyes over the items in it, one will see that the interests of science in Scotland are hardly done justice to. Hon. Members will see that there are items for the Royal Geological Society of London, and for the Royal Academies of Music in England and Ireland; but we have no grants at all in Scotland, and the Royal Geological Society in Ireland can run alone, and does not receive a grant, but there is a grant made to the Marine Biological Association of the United Kingdom. This latter is an association which is not yet, I think, in working order. It has obtained the present grant from the Treasury, whilst a similar association established in Scotland, and which for many years has been in working order and obtaining valuable results, has never yet been able to secure a grant. I will call attention, especially, to the two first items on this Vote—£4,000 a-year for investigation dispensed by a committee of the Royal Society, and £15,300 a-year for meteorological purposes dispensed by the Meteorological Council, which is also a committee of the Royal Society. The two committees exist upon somewhat different foundations, and the committee of the Royal Society which dispenses the £4,000 a-year is a committee appointed by the Royal Society itself, and numbers about 60 members, and there are two representatives from Scotland, members of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, upon it. The Meteorological Council is also a committee of the Royal Society, but it has on it a certain number of individuals subject to the approval of the Treasury. They are all paid members, the chairman getting £300 a-year, and the others about £1,000 a-year divided amongst them. What we complain of with regard to the first item on the Vote is this—we do not make any complaint that there is any unfairness at all in the work done by the Royal Society committee; we are sure that that committee do their utmost to allocate that sum fairly amongst all the claimants who are young scientific men, and desire aid in scientific work; but we say it is practically impossible for a committee of men, the great bulk of whom are scientific men belonging to London, Oxford, and Cambridge, to have adequate knowledge fairly to dispense a grant of this sort, and to recognize the claims of younger men engaged in scientific work in Scotland, and in remote parts of the country. Here is what Sir William Thompson says about it—

> "They had not a word to say against the absolute fairness and the high degree of intelligence which were brought to bear upon the administration of the grant by the Royal Society of London, but they felt that Scotland was placed under a serious disadvantage."

He went on to say—

> "Any scientific worker, whether he is Scotch, or Irish, or English, or German, living in the neighbourhood of London has a great advantage over any worker living in Scotland in respect of aid being given for scientific research."

Again he said—

> "It was, however, physically impossible for that Society to be personally cognizant of the claims and of the securities that any applicant living in Scotland might possess, because they had no personal knowledge of his merits or of the manner in which he was likely to use the money."

I could confirm that statement of Sir William Thompson's by reference to what has been said by others who are interested in the matter; but I do not think it is necessary. It is not possible for Parliamentary documents to show the state of the case; because it is one of the peculiarities of this grant that this committee of the Royal Society renders no account of what it does with this £4,000 a-year. There is no report rendered to any public authority as to what becomes of the money; and though Sir William Thompson says that it is dispensed with fairness, yet the fact remains that there are members upon the committee from the Universities of London, Oxford, and Cambridge, and whilst assistance is given in their parts of the United Kingdom, the younger scientific men in the distant centres of learning do not have sufficient regard paid to their claims by those gentlemen. What I desire in regard to this item is that a sum of at least £1,000 out of the £4,000 should be allocated to a committee of the Scottish scientific bodies for distribution by that committee—I mean a committee such as that of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, or the Royal Society of Glasgow, and representatives of all other scientific bodies in Scotland. There is a grant to the Royal Irish Academy for scientific research, and we desire that a similar body should be constituted in Scotland, and that the sum I have mentioned should be dispensed by that body. My second point is with regard to the Meteorological Vote, which amounts to £15,300 a-year; and what we particularly complain of is this, it is an office for the United Kingdom—what the scientific bodies complained of before Lord Lothian (the Secretary for Scotland) was that a Meteorological Institution, which is in many respects the most important Meteorological Institution in the country—namely, the Observatory on Ben Nevis—gets no aid whatever out of this Vote. I think I can show that fact—namely, that practically the Observatory at Ben Nevis gets no aid out of the Vote. We claim that this important Institution, which has been started by voluntary effort, at an expenditure of about £8,000, has a fair claim to receive some grant in aid. We do not care whether it comes out of this Meteorological Vote or not; but naturally we look to the Meteorological Vote as being the source from which it might be expected to come. Now, what is the position of this Observatory on Ben Nevis? Undoubtedly, there is a grant of £100 a-year by the Meteorological Council; but that is for value received—the committee is supplied with the observations taken, and the clerical work, which is necessary, is itself worth the money. But, more than that, the Government actually makes a profit out of the Observatory there. It is well known to those who have visited the Observatory that a telegraph wire is established from the base to the summit of the mountain, and the Observatory has to pay the Post Office £130 a-year for the use of that wire. Besides that, the Post Office makes for private telegrams over this wire over £30 a-year—it made £31 18*s.* last year. The receipts for the Post Office for Press telegrams from this Observatory, I am also told, amounted in three years to about £200; it is clear, therefore, that the Government, instead of giving any aid to this admirable Institution, absolutely makes a profit out of it at the present time. It will naturally be asked how it is that the Meteorological Council have refused to give any further aid to this valuable Institution. There has been put in my hands within the last day or two the Memorandum just issued by that Body, and it is there stated that the telegrams which have been received from Ben Nevis Observatory during the past six months have been absolutely useless for the purposes of storm warnings. Well, I should like, first, to point out that that is not always the attitude which the Meteorological Council has taken up towards this Observatory, because in their Report of last year, in which it was stated that they have decided to give £100 a-year, they also expressed regret that other demands on the funds at their disposal precluded them from making a larger contribution to the Observatory—that was in the Report for 1885-6. But I would call attention to this, that it has been clearly pointed out that this grant which was given to the Observatory was not given on the understanding merely that telegrams should be sent from Ben Nevis for the purpose of storm warnings. That is not solely, or anything like exclusively, the object for which the Vote is given by the Meteorological Council. Anyone who looks at the annual Report of the Meteorological Committee will see that the Vote was originally designed for three purposes—namely, for land meteorology, for storm warnings, and for ocean meteorology. Last year the sum devoted to land meteorology was £3,160, weather information £4,000, and ocean meteorology £2,845; and there is also out of this £15,000 a-year dispensed by the Committee, a sum which varies from £700 to £1,000 for special scientific researches under the domain of meteorology. Either under the last category, or under that of land meteorology, undoubtedly this Institution at Ben Nevis has a claim upon this Vote. I think I can show from the mouth of Mr. Scott, the secretary of the Council himself, that he is of the same opinion. Giving evidence before Sir William Sterling Maxwell's Committee appointed in 1877 to consider the question of the grants in aid of meteorological observations, Mr. Scott said there was a want of stations at high levels; but an objection existed to them because they would not pay commercially, but he thought that the higher they could be got the better. Since that time we have seen high level stations established in America and other countries, and we have this one established on top of Ben Nevis, which I believe distinguishes itself above the other high level stations for its observations. It is, I believe, the only high-level station where observations are taken all the year round every hour of the night and day for scientific purposes. It is undoubtedly an Institution of the greatest possible value. We therefore claim on behalf of the Institution itself, and also on behalf of Scotch Meteorology, that the Ben Nevis Observatory should have some larger grant, or, at any rate, get some aid from the Government towards its permanent arrangements. We do not, as I have said, care where the money comes from. We do not care whether it comes from this particular item or not; but we do earnestly maintain that it is a grievance that this sum voted by the Imperial Exchequer is not adequately distributed with a view to the interests of Scottish science, and particularly with a view to the interests of this Institution. I would just quote one word from Lord Lothian's reply to the deputation which waited upon him, and to which I have already referred. He said—

> "He felt it very strongly that the request of the deputation was absolutely a reasonable one, and that the funds which had been given for scientific objects in Great Britain nominally, had been confined so entirely to those objects in connection with London, that he would be most happy to do what he could to approach the Treasury and to endeavour to have effect given to the views brought forward that day."

Lord Lothian has endeavoured to give effect to the views of the deputation; but I am afraid he has not had much encouragement from the Treasury. The hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury has been kind enough to show me the correspondence, and I must say I do not think the noble Lord got much satisfaction. But I can assure the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury and the Committee that this a subject deserving very careful inquiry and consideration. It is a subject upon which all the scientific bodies in the North are united, and with regard to which they they are determined as far as they can to press earnestly and continuously on the attention of the Government. I beg to move the reduction of the Vote by £1,000.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum not exceeding £12,800 be granted for the said Services."—(*Mr. Buchanan.*)

Sir EDWARD BIRKBECK (Norfolk, E.): I do not wish to take up the time of the Committee for more than two or three minutes; but with reference to the case of the Ben Nevis Observatory, I can assure the hon. and learned Member for West Edinburgh (Mr. Buchanan) that, according to the opinion of Mr. Robert Scott, the Observatory at Ben Nevis has not been successful, and, according to the information he has received from the various high level stations in Europe they have by no means yielded that success which was expected of them; but what I wish especially to say with reference to this Vote is this, I am greatly disappointed that the Government have not seen their way to increase the Vote. [*Laughter.*] My hon. and learned Friend the Member for West Edinburgh laughs at the idea of increasing the Vote; but I wish to point out the great necessity of giving increased information as to the weather in the interests of agriculture, especially at hay time and harvest. I think that every telegraphic post office throughout the length and breadth of the country should be able to supply information for agricultural purposes regarding the weather in other parts of the country. I know for a fact that information of this kind has been of the greatest value to agriculture, and I know that it would advance those interests very materially if this question were taken up and further facilities were given for obtaining information. The expense which the carrying out of my proposal would entail would be very small indeed. The point, at any rate, is one which I trust the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury will devote careful attention to between now and next Session. In addition to what I have said, I would plead for the distribution of information concerning the weather in the interests of our fishermen, and for the purpose of saving life around our coast. This Vote ought to be materially increased, not only for the sake of increasing the facilities to our fishermen for carrying on their trade along our coast, but also for the purpose of giving storm warnings to people in charge of vessels sailing in British waters. Information of this kind is already given to a certain extent, but I think it might be rendered much more efficient. If this were done I am confident that it would lead to great results, and that many lives which are now lost round our coasts would be saved. If my recommendation was carried out in the interests of our mariners, as well as from an agricultural point of view, both farmers and the fishermen of the United Kingdom would owe a deep debt of gratitude to the Treasury. If they could give further facilities, I think it would be only what is fair and just.

Mr. M'LAREN (Cheshire, Crewe): I desire, though not a Scotch Member, to join my hon. and learned Friend the Member for West Edinburgh (Mr. Buchanan) in objecting to the way in which this large Vote is at present administered. I think he has made out a very strong case indeed in support of his contention that the Meteorological Committee does not deal at all fairly with the Scottish Meteorological Observatories with regard to the distribution of this large Vote. I think, in one respect, the distribution of this Vote should be reconsidered, even if there were no question of giving a portion of it to the Scottish Observatories; £1,000 of the Vote goes to paying the salaries of the chairman and other members of the Meteorological Committee, and it is very doubtful whether, when that £15,000 was originally voted by Parliament in 1877, it was intended that £1,000 should go in salaries to members of the

Committee, and if we can succeed in reducing the Vote by £1,000 I think we shall be justified in doing it—by the £1,000 which the members of the Committee devote to themselves. Now, this money of course is paid by all the taxpayers of the United Kingdom, and yet it is a fact that the whole £15,000—with the exception I think of £100—is devoted to English societies. Scotland gets practically nothing of it, and the Scotch people of course have to pay their share of the taxes. This is a very long-standing grievance. Scottish Members and Scotchmen have long been familiar with the fact that Scotland does not get its fair share in the way of grants of money voted for one purpose or another by this House. Now, the Scottish Meteorological Society was founded in 1855, and for 22 years it struggled on without getting grants from this House, until in 1875 £1,000 was given to it for work it had done previously, and at the same time this Vote of £15,000 a-year was granted, it was announced as clearly as anything could be when the Vote was brought forward, that the Scottish societies were to get their fair share of the money. However, from that time to the present, Scotland has been deprived of any proportion of the grant. In the first place, there is no Scottish member on the Meteorological Committee. An effort was made to get one or two Scotchmen elected, but this was refused, and thus Scotland has no voice in the distribution of the grant. That, I think, in itself was not a proper thing, and if the Royal Society at the instance of the Government appoints a Meteorological Committee, the Government should especially recommend them to see that at least one Scotch scientific man is placed upon that Committee. Now there are other Meteorological Observatories in Scotland besides the one on Ben Nevis, but all of them are maintained by voluntary contributions. They none of them get a portion of this grant, although Parliament has said that the grant is for the encouragement of meteorological research. I believe that the Observatory on Ben Nevis is the only one that gets any of the £15,000, and in that case the money is not received as a grant. It is not received for the encouragement of meteorological research or for the taking of observations, but simply as a payment for the result of the annual observations sent to the Meteorological Council in London. Therefore, we are entitled to say that practically Ben Nevis Observatory gets nothing at all as a gift from the £15,000. Well, Sir, the people of Scotland are always willing to do their utmost to pay their way. They are not always coming to this House asking for grants, and ever since 1855 they have kept up their meteorological observations themselves, and as my hon. and learned Friend the Member for West Edinburgh has said, they have spent £8,000 in establishing this Observatory on the top of Ben Nevis. That capital sum has been laid out, and in addition they have spent £600 a-year raised by voluntary contributions for the support of the Observatory, and they also pay by way of rent £30 a-year to the Post Office for telegraph wires. I think it is inexpressibly shabby on the part of the Government to demand this sum for telegraph wires. If they cannot get a grant from the Government for this Observatory at least I think we should ask that the demand made upon them for this payment should be discontinued. The Observatory is very economically managed, and if Parliament decided upon aiding it, no excessive demand would be made upon the Treasury. £600 a-year is not very much for what the Observatory does. The officials there are a Chief Observer and two assistants, and they take observations every hour of the day and night. Such a state of things in connection with this Observatory is exciting great dissatisfaction both amongst the scientific men of Scotland and the subscribers to the Observatory, and there are signs that the subscriptions will fall off if the observatory does not receive encouragement directly from the Government or from the Meteorological Committee. The work they do is well done, and if the Meteorological Committee or the Government could possibly suggest any improvement in regard to the work, I am sure the authorities would only be too glad to carry it out. It is clear from the evidence laid before the Committee that until pressure was put upon the Meteorological Committee to give money, that body thought the work done by the Observatory on Ben Nevis very good and useful indeed, and it is only when a demand is made for pecuniary assistance that it began picking holes in the work, and declare it to be worthless. The Scottish Society does not ask this money for nothing. They make a very fair offer to the Treasury. They say that if the Treasury will give £1,000, even if they will give a grant of £600 a-year to pay the expenses of the observatory at Ben Nevis, they will start another observatory supported by voluntary contributions at the foot of Ben Nevis, and thus will have observations taken simultaneously every hour of the 24 in the day all through the year at the top and at the foot of Ben Nevis. In his way extremely valuable records will be taken. I think on this point they make a very modest and reasonable request. I repeat the Scotch people do not want this money given to them for nothing. They will meet the Government half way, in fact, they will meet them more than half way, and will continue to spend a large and increasingly sum of money out of their own pockets, provided they can get some encouragement from this Meteorological Committee, or from the Government. What they ask for is a grant of £1,000 or £2,000 a-year. My hon. and learned Friend the Member for West Edinburgh has not sprung his Amendment upon the Committee. His proposal is to the effect that the Vote should be reduced by £1,000; but I think the Government should really consider whether they cannot bring forward the grant we ask for as a Supplementary Estimate, or as a Vote in the Estimates next year, when they grant this money to the Meteorological Committee and the Royal Society of Scotland. The Royal Society, which gets the £4,000 a-year, which we are about to vote, does not grant anything at all to this Scottish Society, and the reason they refuse to do so is, because they say they cannot grant money to permanent institutions. I dare say that is a very well-founded objection; but it does not apply to the Meteorological Committee, which grants its money to permanent societies for permanent investigation. What we contend for is, that justice should be done to Scotland in this matter, and that the Scottish people should not go on for ever paying more than their share of the taxes, and getting less than their share of their money back again in the shape of grants. We have been told that Lord Lothian, the Secretary for Scotland, is in favour of this grant.

MR. JACKSON: He did not say so.

MR. M'LAREN: But the hon. and learned Member for West Edinburgh said he did.

MR. BUCHANAN: I said he thought it was absolutely reasonable.

MR. M'LAREN: I take it that Gentlemen are generally in favour of what they consider to be absolutely reasonable. I think we see in all this the ill-effects of not having the Scotch Secretary in the Cabinet. As long as the Scotch Secretary is not in the Cabinet, Scotland will be treated unfairly in the matter of these grants, and we shall not expect justice to be done. It was announced on the last Vote that £1,500 was extracted from the National Exchequer for the National Gallery, and we cannot get a grant of £1,000 for the Ben Nevis Meteorological Observatory. I think it must be obvious that both for scientific purposes, and as the hon. Member for East Norfolk (Sir Edward Birkbeck) has said, in the interests of the farmers and fishermen of the country, that these meteorological observations should be carefully recorded. Though we have no Scotch Representative on the Treasury Bench at the present time, I hope, that, at any rate, the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury will endeavour to do justice to Scotland in this matter. Even if he does not assent to the Amendment which is before the Committee, I hope he will bring pressure to bear on the Government of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in order to get them to make a grant to Scotland next year.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): I have great pleasure in supporting this Motion. I would call the attention of the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury to the gross injustice with which Scotland is treated on all these Votes. Might I just say a word or two upon this Vote we are now discussing? England receives £20,000 a-year in grants for scientific purposes, and Ireland receives over £3,000 a-year, whilst in Scotland we are supposed to get a sum of only £300 a-year for scientific purposes. I say we are supposed to get it, for that £300 is all paid back to the Government in rent and taxes by the Royal Society of Edinburgh. Not one single penny, therefore, is given to Scotland. You get £20,000 in England, and you give free quarters in Burlington House to the English Society; you give money to the Irish Society; but all you do for Scotland is to give her £300, and then take it back again in the shape of rent and taxes. I maintain that this £15,000 is one of the Votes which ought to be reduced. I should like the Vote to be reduced by £3,800, which is the amount spent by the Meteorological Committee in carrying on its work. The Committee give themselves very nice salaries; indeed, the money is jobbed away in one way or another. Public money ought not to be used in the fashion this money is used. I find that out of £15,000 which has been voted annually for the last four or five years, only about £700 on the average has been spent yearly in scientific researches; the rest has been spent in salaries and other expenses. The real scientific work is done by men of science who are fond of science. If Scotchmen used this money in the way I believe it is used in England and Ireland, I do not think it would be of much good in Scotland; but while you are subsidizing scientific societies Scotland should get its share of the subsidy. Scotland is awakening to the importance of this question, and the unfair way in which it has been treated financially since the Union will stimulate the Home Rule agitation among the people of that country. I have much pleasure in supporting the proposed reduction of the Vote.

MR. M'LAGAN (Linlithgow): I regret to vote at any time for the reduction of a sum granted for scientific purposes. I shall vote for the proposed reduction of this Vote, but with great reluctance; I shall do it as a protest against the manner in which Scotland is treated in this respect. I thoroughly agree with what has been said by preceding speakers, that Scotland has not got its fair share of this money, although it pays a large amount of taxation. After the speech of my hon. and learned Friend the Member for West Edinburgh (Mr. Buchanan), I do not intend to engage the attention of the Committee for long. I will merely say that out of £23,000 voted for the learned societies only £300 goes to Scotland. We ask that we shall be given one-twelfth part of this money, and that is far less in proportion to the population of Scotland, and far less in proportion to the taxation of Scotland than Scotland ought to receive. Let me mention another fact. I find that £5,000 was given towards the establishment of a Royal Biological Association in Ireland; and that £500 is given annually. We established a Biological Society with full equipment; but when we asked for a grant of £100 we were ignominiously refused. The Scotch lion has up to this refused to roar; but you may depend upon it, when it does take it into its head to roar, it will get what it wants. As to the Meteorological Society, let me say that we established a Meteorological Society in Scotland; we made observations, and we applied them solely to agriculture and the fisheries; and although agriculture and the fisheries derived a great deal of benefit from them, we have only been able, during the 22 years that the Society has been established, to get £1,000 out of the Government. We want money to assist us in carrying on our meteorological work; we want to carry our observations further by establishing another Observatory at the bottom of Ben Nevis. If £2,000 were granted to Scotland for scientific purposes, we would be quite content to support all our scientific societies, and we would ask the Government for nothing more. It costs us £600 a-year to carry on the present Observatory. I trust that before another year comes round we shall not be put to the necessity of coming to this House with a request for more money for our scientific societies; but that the Treasury, long before the Estimates are presented, will have granted us the subsidy we desire.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): The money given for scientific purposes in Ireland does not amount to anything like our proper share. There seems to be £300 given in this Vote for music in Ireland; that is a very interesting subject; but I think it is more an art than a science. The money for the Zoological Society is really very well spent. We could not keep up the Society without this money; and it is very important that the grant should be continued. Reference has been made to the Irish Academy; but if anyone looks at the Estimate he will see that the money granted to the Academy is for the keeping up of the Celtic language and for antiquarian research. Practically, none of this money is devoted to the advancement of science in Ireland, and what is particularly desired in Ireland is that a sum of money should be devoted to science as it is in England. There is one subject to which I particularly wish to draw the attention of the Committee; it is a matter of the greatest importance to farmers. The sum of £15,300 is a late addition to the Estimates, and the reason that is given for the devotion of this money to meteorological purposes is that it is advisable that we should have weather forecasts and weather reports.

The CHAIRMAN: An Amendment has been moved in reference to the question of justice to Scotland, and that issue must be disposed of first.

COLONEL NOLAN: I hope Scotland may get every justice from this Committee; but I hope that if I and my hon. Friends support the Scotch Members in this matter it will not be taken that we Irish Members are disposed to allow Ireland to go without her fair share of this money, but that our vote will be taken as a protest against the enormous proportion of money which is allotted to England. We shall reserve to ourselves the right of bringing forward the question, not of justice to Scotland, but of justice to Ireland. When the particular Amendment before the Committee is disposed of I shall move to reduce the Vote by £500, with the object of raising the question of the publication of weather forecasts in the different districts of Ireland.

SIR JOHN LUBBOCK (London University): My hon. and learned Friend the Member for West Edinburgh (Mr. Buchanan) has brought forward this Motion in a most temperate and moderate speech; at the same time, I do not think his speech led up to the Resolution he moved. It appears to me that several hon. Members who have spoken have laboured under a misapprehension as to the amount of this Vote which is spent in different parts of the United Kingdom. My hon. and learned Friend began by complaining that £2,500 is given to the Marine Biological Association—principally an English Association—and that nothing has been done for the Scotch Association. I am always glad when the Committee votes anything for scientific purposes, and I shall be glad to see anything voted for the Scotch Association. At the same time, there is a Scotch Fishery Board which receives £12,000 a-year, and the sum of £2,500 has been given to the English Marine Biological Association in the belief and hope that it will benefit fishermen in this country. Really there is a sum given to Scotland for the same purpose. The principal gravamen of the hon. and learned Gentleman's complaint is that the Meteorological Committee does not sufficiently recognize the Ben Nevis Observatory. The Meteorological Committee is not a really English Committee; it is composed of the most eminent scientific authorities. The secretary is Mr. Scott, and I think that everybody will agree that you could hardly have an abler or a stronger Meterological Committee, or a number of gentlemen more qualified to form an opinion upon meteorological questions. I venture to say that these gentlemen never consider for a moment whether the money is to be spent in England, Scotland, and Ireland, but how it can be best expended in the general interest. They come to the conclusion that to increase the amount of the grant to the Ben Nevis Observatory would not be proper; that the results would not justify an increase of the expenditure in that direction. When we have a Committee consisting of such eminent gentlemen I can hardly imagine that this Committee will override its decision. The money has been spent among the different stations which send out storm warnings, and I find that there are 12 of such stations in England, three in Scotland, and three in Ireland. That seems to be a very fair division, and it is one, no doubt, which has been very carefully considered. I am persuaded that the Meteorological Committee simply considered in what way the money could be best spent in the general interest. Then my hon. and learned Friend (Mr. Buchanan) complained that no grant had been made to the Scottish Meteorological Society; that the English Society receives the whole £15,000, excepting £500 for the Geographical Society. There is no grant to any English Society whatever; the main part of this grant is granted to the Meteorological Committee, and I have already shown that it is not spent with reference to England, Scotland, or Ireland. Then, again, the

£4,000 is not a grant to the Royal Society, directly speaking. It is a grant which is administered by a Committee composed of members appointed partly by the Royal Society and partly by other societies. Having sat on the Committee, I can assure hon. Members that when any application for a grant for scientific investigation is made it is most fairly considered. My hon. and learned Friend most fairly and courteously said he did not impute for a moment any unfairness to the Committee, and I am sure other hon. Members who have spoken did not intend to do so in the least; but they seem to be under the impression that these grants for the purpose of scientific investigation are used solely by English scientific societies. I trust I have shown to the Committee that it is really nothing at all of the kind; as a matter of fact, the Royal Society, which includes among its members representatives of Scotch societies, distributes this grant of £4,000 entirely in the interest of science generally. If my hon. and learned Friend thinks there are other Scotch societies whom it may be well to have represented on that Committee I do not think he would find any objection raised to their representation. As far as I am concerned, I should be very glad to see all the Scottish societies appointing delegates to form part of the Committee. I think the hon. and learned Gentleman will see that it is very desirable that there should be one general body to administer the grant, otherwise the money might be voted twice over. It is advisable that we should get the most eminent authorities we can together, and that they should decide as to the manner in which the money can be best spent. If hon. Members will look at the details of the Vote, they will see there has been absolutely no grant to any English society whatever. The money which has been spent has really been spent in the general interest of the whole country. The idea of expending money on English, Scotch, or Irish Societies because they are such never enters into the calculation.

Mr. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.): I cannot help observing that while this question has been under discussion not a single Member of Her Majesty's Government connected with Scotland has been present in the House. This is only another specimen of the way in which Scotch Business is generally done. Now, I quite agree with those who view with great jealousy the expenditure of money for scientific purposes; I agree with those who hold that the endowment of research is only an euphemism for the endowment of perambulators. I believe that scientific research prospers best when it is left very largely to itself; but, in this case, we have to deal with a very special set of circumstances. A very large sum of money has been subscribed voluntarily in Scotland—to the extent of £8,000—for the establishment of an Observatory on Ben Nevis. This question has been argued by some as if it were a Scottish question; but this Observatory has been established for the benefit of science, for the benefit of the United Kingdom, and the amount of money that is required to maintain this Institution is extremely small—it is only £470 a-year in addition to the sum required for the Telegraph Service. What I should like to know is, what the opinion of the Government is with regard to the value of the Ben Nevis Observatory? If that Observatory is not of sufficient importance to justify its being maintained, then let it drop; but if it is the opinion of the Government that it ought not to be abandoned, then it is absolutely necessary that a portion of this grant should be set aside for its maintenance. We are told that Mr. Scott is of opinion that the results obtained are not worth the money expended. But, on the other hand, a scientific man of the greatest eminence—Sir William Thompson—states that the results obtained at Ben Nevis have a most important bearing on the weather statistics, besides being of great value to the Department of Metaphysics. I find also that the British Association for the Advancement of Science have from time to time made grants for the assistance of the Ben Nevis Observatory; but the rule of that Association prevents them making grants to a permanent society. Now, the Royal Society, although it has declined to subscribe, has not done so on the ground that the results are not valuable, but that its funds are not sufficient to enable it to do so. Therefore, so far as scientific testimony goes, the maintenance of this Observatory appears to be of importance in the general interest of science. The question the Government must face very soon is, whether or not they are prepared to see this important station maintained for the benefit of meteorological science. This is not a question of giving money for Scotland. This Institution is one in which the Scottish people have taken great interest, and to which they have subscribed in the most liberal manner; but in doing so they have been actuated by no selfish ideas, but have acted solely in the interests of science in general.

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): I will not detain the Committee very long in endeavouring to answer the very many questions which have been put to the Government. I think the hon. Gentleman the Member for North Aberdeen (Mr. Hunter), who has just sat down, has practically furnished a complete answer to everything that has been said. I must entirely and thoroughly agree with the hon. Member that the establishment of the Observatory on Ben Nevis is not a question simply for the benefit of Scotland; but it is an establishment which will probably benefit the whole of the United Kingdom. My contention must be that, precisely as that argument applies to the grant for Ben Nevis, it applies to the whole of the grant which is given to the Meteorological Society. It cannot be said with any approach to truth, or bearing in mind the circumstances of the case, that the grant which is administered by the Royal Society, or the grant which is administered by the Meteorological Society, is for the benefit of England alone. The grants are made for the benefit and interest of science at large, and Scotland benefits by the researches which are made by these societies exactly to the same extent that England and Ireland benefit. That will be my contention, and I think it is a contention which it is very easy to maintain. It is not very encouraging, however, to hear hon. Gentlemen speak of this money as having been wasted; one hon. Gentleman, I think, spoke of the money which is voted by this House for scientific purposes as having been "jobbed away." If that is true, there is no great encouragement for us to increase the grant in such directions. Really, the speakers upon this Vote appear to me to have answered each other. Now, something has been said about the Ben Nevis Observatory. I do not wish for one moment in any way to cast a doubt upon the value of the Ben Nevis Observatory; but reference has been made to the value of the information obtained from Ben Nevis. It is necessary, I think, to call the attention of the House to the fact that the Meteorological Society have made careful observation as to the value of the telegrams received from Ben Nevis between the 1st of January, 1886, and the 30th of April, 1887. The result is that during this period they received from Ben Nevis only 19 telegrams, and of these only two arrived before storm warnings were issued, and on these occasions the receipt of the telegrams in no way influenced the Society in determining the warnings. In the opinion of the Society the telegrams from Ben Nevis, in their existing form, are absolutely useless. So far as to the value of the Observatory from this point of view of the Meteorological Society; but I desire in no way to minimize the value of the work which may be done at Ben Nevis in other directions. But the Committee must remember that the Vote for the Meteorological Society was raised for the distinct purpose of giving throughout the Kingdom warnings of storms and weather forecasts. I am quite correct in saying that the grant to the Society was augmented from £14,500 to £15,000, on the Motion of the late Mr. A. M. Sullivan, to enable the Meteorological Society to supply 8 a.m. forecasts gratuitously to all newspapers applying for them; and £300 more was added in 1882, and the arrangement was made permanent, subject to 12 months' notice. It is the fact, therefore, that the grant was increased with a direct reference to enlarging and extending the information throughout the country; and I believe it is acknowledged by everyone that the Royal Society and the Meteorological Society do administer these grants—not for the benefit of England, or of Ireland, or of Scotland in particular, but in the interests of science at large, and that in the benefits of these grants everybody practically shares alike. This is my answer to hon. Members who have raised any question as to the distribution of the grants. The only point in which I can sympathize with the hon. and learned Member for West Edinburgh (Mr.

Buchanan), who has raised this question, is the very natural desire that Scotland should be in some way represented on the Meteorological Committee. So far as the Treasury is concerned—and I speak entirely from the narrow Treasury point of view—there is no desire to limit or fetter the freedom of the Meteorological Society, or of the Royal Society, in the administering of these Votes. The Treasury will offer no objection to a portion of the grant which is administered by the Society being administered, if it is thought proper, in the interests of Scotland, or to the association of Scottish Members more closely with the Society. If I can do anything in that direction I shall be most happy to do it.

Mr. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): I have only one or two words to say in regard to the observations of the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) concerning the Ben Nevis Observatory. I think the hon. Gentleman has not quite understood what is the point of my hon. and learned Friend (Mr. Buchanan). We do not accuse the hon. Gentleman of any disposition to despise Ben Nevis or its Observatory; but we think he does not quite appreciate its value. It is not a question of storm warnings. It was never expected or intended that the Ben Nevis Observatory should add much to our knowledge as to storms; but it was thought that an Observatory at Ben Nevis would add very much to our knowledge of meteorology generally. As the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury, who ought to know everything, doubtless knows, meteorology is the least advanced science among the sciences of Nature. Much remains to be made out by observations which will affect our knowledge of the causes which determine the weather; and it is impossible to say what valuable and new light observations made at this great height may throw on the subject. We expect very large and tangible results from the Observatory; and we hope that, under these circumstances, the Treasury will consider the case of the Ben Nevis Observatory, and that they will, in one form or another, make special provision for it. It must not be supposed that there is any Scotch jealousy in the matter. We know that the Scientific Committee in England would never think of regarding the administration of the money voted as a matter in which the claims of the different countries should be considered as mutually hostile, or in any way opposed to one another. But, at the same time, it would give some satisfaction in Scotland if it were arranged that Scotland should be more distinctly represented on the Body administering the Vote, or if there was a Vote given to the Scottish Society to be distributed in its own way, and among the younger observers who may not be well known in London.

Mr. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.): I confess that I am not able to regard the reply of the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury with any very great satisfaction. I cannot but think that it is hardly fair that the Meteorological Society should take up the position they have done, and try, I must say, somewhat ungenerously, to throw a stigma upon the good work done at the Ben Nevis Observatory, by saying that, for the limited purpose of storm warnings, only 19 telegrams had been received during a period of 16 months, and that the whole of these telegrams were practically useless. It is hardly fair for the Meteorological Society of London to try to damage the Ben Nevis Observatory by stating that the telegrams received from it are useless for the purpose of storm warnings. It seems to me that the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury has hardly met the case fairly in saying that the primary object for which the money was voted was that of weather forecasts and storm warnings. In consequence of the answer I have received from the Government, I shall be obliged to press my Motion to a Division in order to enforce my views upon this question, from which views there is no dissent among literary men in Scotland. I observe that the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) is now in his place; and, as the right hon. and learned Gentleman is himself a scientific man, I am sure that no one can with greater force urge this question upon the consideration of the Treasury. I appeal to the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) to consider whether he cannot see his way to improve the administration of this Vote.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen) (St. George's, Hanover Square): I cannot help thinking that the hon. and learned Member for West Edinburgh would rather prejudice than advance his case if he divided the Committee upon this question. What he is anxious for is that the Government should approach the question with a view to see what can be done to meet the views of the Scottish Members. I cannot think he would further his wish by dividing the House on the present occasion, and possibly obtaining an adverse vote. I am persuaded it would be better if the hon. and learned Member would leave the matter in the hands of the Government, on whose part there is a desire to see how far they can meet the views expressed.

Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): I should also like to put it to my hon. and learned Friend the Member for West Edinburgh (Mr. Buchanan) whether it would be wise for him to take a Division on this question; whether he would by a Division really get a fair judgment of the House upon the question? My sympathies are exceedingly strong with the hon. and learned Gentleman; but I am afraid that if he goes to a Division we shall get an adverse decision of the House, and we shall practically be giving the sanction of the House of Commons, which has not yet been given, to the present mode of administration by the Royal Society and the Meteorological Society of these grants. I think the Scotch Members have made out a strong case, and I think there is room for considerable doubt as to whether this money is being so wisely administered as the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury seems to think. Personally, I consider that the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has met the case very fairly. I hope the Government will consider the whole matter during the Recess, and consider also whether it would not be wise next Session to appoint a small Select Committee to inquire into the matter. At present Parliament has no effective control. £20,000 a-year is being expended, and I have great doubt as to whether the country receives value for the money. I have very great doubt as to whether the meteorological returns we receive are very accurate; indeed, I believe that, if returns were laid on the Table of the House as to the weather forecasts, and as to what the weather really turned out to be, they would not prove to be very accurate. I am in entire sympathy with the hon. and learned Gentleman; but I must put in a little *caveat* against the separatist tendency of some of the arguments which have been advanced. At the same time, I think there is a case for inquiry as to whether these grants are administered on very well ascertained rules, and in accordance with a very wise precedent. Of this I am perfectly certain—that a Division now would be completely misleading. Let me say one word more, and it is this—it is now a quarter past 10 o'clock, and I believe that since 5 o'clock this Committee of Supply has been occupied in discussing Motions not for the reduction but for the increase of the national expenditure. Nowadays most of the Motions made in Supply amount to application for the expenditure of more money. I remember my right hon. Friend the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) telling me that while he was Chancellor of the Exchequer there were 28 proposals made in the House for the reduction of the national expenditure, and 500 proposals for the increase of the expenditure. It is certainly not very encouraging to those who have economy very much at heart to find a disposition on the part of hon. Members to spend more money.

Dr. CLARK: The hon. Baronet the Member for the University of London (Sir John Lubbock) has spoken of the representation of Scotland upon the Committee of the Royal Society. I frankly admit that Scotland is represented upon the Committee, but only by two gentlemen out of 60 who compose the Committee. For the presence of the two gentlemen Scotland has to pay £40 a-year. The Royal Society and not Scotland votes the money, and none of the money voted goes to Scotland.

Mr. BUCHANAN: I am not convinced it would be desirable to avoid taking a Division, because I have got absolutely nothing from the Government. If the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen), or the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith), will promise that a Committee will be appointed to inquire into the distribution of these grants, I would think twice before dividing; but otherwise I do not see what I would gain by abstaining from dividing. I have received absolutely no assurance or concession from the Government.

Mr. GOSCHEN: It was in the interest of the hon. and learned Member (Mr. Buchanan), and not in the interest of the Government, that I counselled him not to divide. We are prepared to consider the matter. We cannot hand over everything to a Select Committee. Select Committees would be soon exhausted if all these questions were referred to a Select Committee. We will consider the matter in the Recess; but if the hon. and learned Member chooses to take a Division, of course we cannot prevent him doing so.

Question put.

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 45; Noes 99: Majority 54.—(Div. List, No. 414.) [10.20 p.m.]

Original Question again proposed.

Colonel NOLAN (Galway, N.): The question I sought to bring before the Committee a few moments ago, when I was ruled out of Order, has been brought before the Committee on previous occasions. I maintain that we are wasting the money given to the Meteorological Society if we do not distribute the results obtained by the Society in such a manner that they will be valuable to the people who want to use them most. The results obtained by the Society are, I acknowledge, of some use to fishermen; but there is a class of people in the country which is much more numerous, and that is the farming class, to whom these results would be useful. This year we have had a very long spell of dry weather, and therefore the ordinary warnings would have been comparatively useless. Generally, however, at hay and harvest time it is important that farmers should be able to know what sort of weather there is likely to be within any given 24 hours. I am quite aware that no Meteorological Society can infallibly supply accurate predictions all over the country; but they can help the farmers a great deal. The results are already obtained by the Society. The Society know the force of the currents of air; they know what the barometrical pressure is; and they are able, with a certain degree of accuracy, to predict what the weather is going to be. To be of service to farmers, these predictions must be easily accessible. In nearly every country town there is nowadays a telegraph office, and all that need be done is that the Postmaster General should direct that at 9 o'clock every morning the prediction from the Central Council shall be posted on the window of every telegraph office. The cost of this arrangement will be practically nothing. You may say it will entail the trouble of signalling. I do not suggest that the whole of the predictions should be posted on every telegraph office window. I only want that the weather forecasts for the particular district in which the office is situated should be posted, unless the office is just between two districts, when the forecasts for both districts may be posted. I speak under correction; but I believe that every telegraph office throughout the United Kingdom is supplied every morning with Greenwich time. There would be no very great trouble in sending at the same time the weather forecasts. The amount of time spent in telegraphing would not be more than a few seconds. When I brought this question up on a previous occasion the only argument adduced against my suggestion was that we should interfere with the newspapers. I have spoken to a gentleman who was the proprietor of the largest newspaper in Ireland; and certainly, at that time, he had no objection whatever to the Post Office signalling the state of the weather. I do not think what I suggest would injure the newspapers at all, because the very people who buy newspapers are the people whose attention is drawn to weather reports. The proposal I make would be a very great help to the farmers in the country districts, and, instead of injuring the newspapers, I think it would really be a benefit to them. However that may be, I have no objection that the towns in the immediate vicinity of London and Dublin, which may be supposed to get the newspapers in time to be of use to the inhabitants, should be excepted; but, as I have said, in the remote rural districts it is most necessary that the information should be given, because there the people cannot possibly get a newspaper until at least 12 hours after it is published, and the information is then too late to be of any use. I consider this matter to be one of very great importance, and it is for that reason that I draw the attention of the Government to it. The consequence to the country would be nothing whatever in point of cost. None of the representatives of the Press have ever opposed themselves to such action on the part of the Government, and it cannot be denied that the information would be of considerable value, not only to the farmers, but also to the Meteorological Bodies throughout the country; and, moreover, I think, if you could confer some practical benefit in this way, that the great body of the people would take an interest in the subject, which at present is not the case. Finally, I would say that, although we spend a little money upon these calculations, the amount of importance we attach to them is nothing like that which obtains in America, where the results are regularly published.

Mr. HANBURY (Preston): I hope the Government will pay attention to what has been said by the hon. and gallant Member for North Galway (Colonel Nolan), because this is a serious matter. We are spending this large sum of money which benefits the towns, but is of no benefit whatever to the people in the rural districts. In towns, so far as this information is concerned, it is only a question of whether one should take out an umbrella, or what sort of day it is likely to be; but it has a far more serious bearing on the country districts. It is of no use to say that these reports are in the newspapers, because the people who are in the rural districts only get a newspaper, perhaps, once a week, or, even if they take one in daily, it arrives too late to be of any use. Certainly, I think it is most desirable to carry out the proposal of the hon. and gallant Member in hay and harvest time. The Government can have a short report sent down to the post offices without any extra expense whatever, and thereby confer a great boon upon the farmers in the country districts, who, although they bear their full share of the expense, at present get no benefit from it whatever.

Colonel WARING (Down, N.): I entirely agree with the suggestion of the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for North Galway, and I also rise to say a few words on this Vote. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) promised that during the Recess he would take into consideration the propriety of extending the distribution of this Vote. I would ask my right hon. Friend whether he has considered the rainfall accounts which have been taken by Mr. Symonds, and whether it has been decided that he should receive any assistance from the Votes of this House? The expense hitherto has been entirely supplied by private subscription. The information obtained is very valuable in the case of waterworks and establishments of that kind, and I think the present is a fair time to urge on the Government the consideration of the work done by Mr. Symonds, with a view to his having some assistance in carrying out that work.

Mr. MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright): Although I quite agree with what has been said with regard to Government assistance in works of this kind, I wish to point out that in Scotland we only receive £300. We find most of the money for this work ourselves, and we have a meteorological report sent to us daily. I think if we can do this in Scotland, farmers in England and Ireland might do the same; and although I cannot say that we do not want more money for these purposes, I think our neighbours should take our advice, and put their hands into their own pockets for the purpose of getting these reports.

Mr. M. J. KENNY (Tyrone, Mid.): I opposed this Vote last year, and I feel disposed to oppose it on the present occasion. It appears to me that the work now being done is merely experimental, and that the science of meteorology is only in its infancy. But, at any rate, as far as I can see, the body who call themselves the Meteorological Committee utterly fail to take the steps which were intended by Parliament to be taken for the purpose of bringing the science to greater perfection. I do not know that their observations thus far have been of such a reliable character that their circulation in the rural districts or amongst the fishing population would be very valuable, because my own experience of fishermen is that they are as well able to judge what weather they are going to have as those who take these observations in different parts of the country. We have no real Annual Report from the Council, telling us what they do for the enormous amount of money voted every year. We have here the sum of £15,000 going annually to this body of which we do not get any adequate account, and they cannot show us so far that they have made any real or rational progress in the science of meteorology. Some years ago a gentleman rather well known as a meteorologist made certain suggestions to this

Society for the purpose of taking observations in the Atlantic, so as to be able to gain knowledge of the atmospheric currents; and, as far as I can understand, his efforts were practically repulsed on the ground that other suggestions of a similar character had already been made, and that they were impracticable. Now, it appears to me that if anything like real progress is to be made in of science of meteorology the experiment must be carried out altogether regardless of success or probable failure. If there is a reasonable belief that these experiments will lead to anything like valuable discovery, I should think they ought to be undertaken; and, seeing that this body receives this large sum of money, and furnishes reports to newspapers in the United Kingdom, which are of very little use, and for which they charge £800 a-year, I think we ought to ask for some information from the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury as to what is done with the money voted. As the matter now stands, I cannot see that we are any better off than we were 10 years ago. We have these newspaper reports it is true; but, as far as persons carrying on agricultural operations are concerned, they are in the same position as before, while as to the fishermen, I believe that these reports do not afford the slightest protection; and there is just as much loss of life among that class as there used to be.

COLONEL NOLAN: In the absence of a few words from the Government on this subject I think I shall have to move the reduction of the Vote. I have asked the Governmet if they will cause these reports to be published in the rural districts during hay time and harvest. I quite agree with the hon. Member for Preston (Mr. Hanbury) that it is sufficient that the reports should be confined to that period. In reply to the hon. Member for Kirkcudbright (Mr. Mark Stewart), I should fancy that certain gentlemen in the localities combine together to supply this information to the farmers. These gentlemen would have to put their hands into their pockets in order to telegraph to London and to pay for the reply, whereas the Postmaster General can telegraph the information without any expense whatever. The only question to be considered is as to whether the arrangement would interfere with the newspapers. I do not believe that it would. On the other hand, you would stimulate the farmers in the direction of good farming, and that, I think, is well worthy of the attention of the Government.

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): I would point out to the hon. and gallant Member for North Galway that the reports are published in all the newspapers every morning in all the districts. [An hon. MEMBER: No, no!] I think I am correct; but I will look into the matter and see if it is possible to arrange for what the hon. and gallant Gentleman requires.

MR. AIRD (Paddington, N.): I wish to say a few words as to the great use the Reports of the Meteorological Society have been to the various industries in this country. I may point out with regard to the particular works upon which I have been engaged for so many years, that we have, ourselves, derived great benefit from them. We have made it a rule in carrying out these large works to arrange with the Meteorological Society, for a reasonable payment, to send telegrams every morning as to the weather we may reasonably expect. We have certainly derived great benefit from the knowledge thus gained, and therefore I hope it is not taking up the time of the Committee unnecessarily by asking that every assistance should be given to further the observations which have proved so useful in the past.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I have no doubt that what the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for North Galway (Colonel Nolan) requires should be done if these forecasts could be relied upon; but I must say that I share the opinion of the hon. Member for Mid Tyrone (Mr. M. J. Kenny) that this particular science has not yet reached a reliable point. I have often found these calculations at variance with the actual weather experienced, and the other day when there was a great thunderstorm, I looked to the forecast and there was no indication whatever that the storm was approaching. While I hope that this science will progress, I have doubts whether Her Majesty's Government should add to their other responsibilities that of being answerable for the weather.

MR. PROVAND: (Glasgow, Blackfriars, &c.): The hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury has said that he will place this matter before the right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) and see what can be done with regard to it. I may be permitted to point out, however, that the Post Office has informed me that they have no power by their Acts of Parliament to disseminate news. In the Return which I hold in my hand it is mentioned that £800 is paid for sending weather reports to the newspapers in order that the newspapers may disseminate them. I think that practice ought to be stopped at once. There is no property in this country which has been so successful as newspaper property, and I think that this expense is one which the proprietors should bear themselves. I believe that the Post Office has no power of disseminating news in the way suggested by the hon. and gallant Member for North Galway (Colonel Nolan).

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): There seems to be a difficulty in getting information from the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury with regard to this Vote. I wish to point out that there are half-a-dozen Fellows of the Meteorological Society who put £1,800 into their pockets out of this Vote. I think we ought to know exactly how much the Fellows of the Society get out of this grant.

Mr. JACKSON: I am afraid that I cannot answer the question of the hon. Member; the only information I have is as to the total amount. As the hon. Member has said, there appears to be a payment of £300 to the Chairman, and a certain amount for fees to five other members, making a total amount of £1,000 in all. The Secretary apparently gets £800 a-year, and £1,000 appears to be devoted to special researches and experiments. That is all the information I am able to give at the moment; but if the hon. Gentleman desires it, I shall be happy to make further inquiries.

Dr. CLARK: I beg to give Notice to the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury that if this Vote appears in the same form on the Estimates next year, I shall move its reduction by the sum of £1,800.

Original Question put, and *agreed to.*

(6.) £7,321, to complete the sum for the London University.

(7.) £9,000, to complete the sum for the University Colleges, Wales.

Mr. Provand

Mr. T. E. ELLIS (Merionethshire): I do not propose to ask the Committee to reduce this Vote, because, in my opinion, no money can be better spent than that which we are now asked for; but I wish to make a brief reference to one or two points in connection with the Colleges in North and South Wales. In the case of the Colleges at Bangor and Cardiff the grant has been made permanent, and a Charter of Corporation has been granted them; but in the case of Aberystwith College it was made a necessary condition that the people of Wales must first contribute £1,000 in order to get the grant at all; and, further, the grant is only given for three years, a circumstance which produces great uncertainty, inasmuch as it is impossible for the Governors in consequence to complete their plans. They are now building a new College at an expense of £20,000; and, owing to the want of a Charter, an immense difficulty is experienced in coming to a decision with the contractor and in respect of other business. I wish to point out that, notwithstanding the fact that this inequality exists as between the Colleges, the results of the examinations show that Aberystwith does practically twice as much work as the other two Colleges together; and I have risen for the purpose of asking the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury whether he will impress upon the Government the duty of clearing away this inequality by giving a permanent grant and a Charter of Corporation to Aberystwith College?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Jackson) (Leeds, N.): I think the statement of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Merionethshire (Mr. T. E. Ellis) who has just spoken upon this subject seems to show that Aberystwith College does better without a permanent grant than the two other Colleges which have such grants. I cannot think that that is a good argument in support of the hon. Gentleman's case; but, however that may be, I have no knowledge that the Government have any intention of interfering with the grant that is at present given. I will, however, inquire as to this and also the question of the Charter.

Vote *agreed to.*

(8.) £1,487, to complete the sum for the Deep Sea Exploring Expedition (Report).

DR. CLARK (Caithness): I rise to task whether it is not nearly time that this Vote came to an end? It is 11 years since the *Challenger* finished its last excursion, and even now we are asked for £3,000 for publishing the accounts. On such terms as this the charge is likely to go on for another 11 years, and I should like to have some idea of when this example of jobbing on scientific grounds will be put a stop to.

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): I am in hope, Sir, that this charge will very soon come to an end. There is, I think, no doubt that the report of the investigations made by the *Challenger* will be a very valuable record; but it would be of no use unless it were published. The work is being carried out with a remodelled staff, and I am informed that it will come to an end in about three years.

MR. M. J. KENNY (Tyrone, Mid): I would like to know what will be done with the volumes when they are published? We have the reports from time to time; but my wish is to learn in what manner the work when complete will be circulated. I have looked at some of the volumes, and it occurs to me that they are of extreme value; and my object is to secure, if possible, that the public libraries in England, Ireland, and Scotland shall be supplied with copies of the work. The hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury has pointed out that the results of the expedition would be of no use unless they were published; and I therefore suggest that the volumes as they appear should be circulated in such a way as to be accessible to the public.

MR. JACKSON: The question raised by the hon. Gentleman, I believe, was settled by a Committee, which decided to what learned societies, libraries, and colleges a copy of the work should be given. I believe the copies are limited in number, a certain number being for distribution, and a certain number for sale, and for what is called reserve store.

MR. EDWARD HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.): It is said that there have been 14 or 15 volumes disseminated. The hon. Gentleman has failed to tell us what volume we have got to at present, and perhaps he will indicate it. Will any Member of the Government indicate—even by his fingers—what volume they have reached? If any Member of the Government will do that I will sit down at once. The *Challenger* has led us to a certain number of discoveries, and after 11 years we come to a certain volume relating to them; but hon. Gentlemen opposite do not know what it is. Would the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury kindly inform us where does this grant of £500 a-year come in? Is the Director to supervise this matter for another 11 years—for 11 times 11 years—is he to get 11 times 11 times £500? This seems to me an exceedingly possible, if not probable, waste of public money. I do not pretend to know much about this matter. [*Laughter, and cries of* "Oh, oh!"] Well, I can return the compliment to hon. Gentlemen opposite. I think they know less than nothing about this subject. It seems to me that the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury has helped those who know very little about this matter to know still less about it. I ask when this payment of £500 will terminate, and why it is that the nation should be called upon to continue this payment? If these are not pertinent questions, and are not worthy of an answer, I shall be quite as satisfied as the hon. Gentleman is.

MR. JACKSON: I cannot answer the question as to the number of the volume; but with regard to the expenditure which the hon. Member for West Kerry (Mr. E. Harrington) has mentioned, this remodelling of the staff was agreed to in 1877. I believe I overstated the matter when I said it would come to an end in three years time, because I believe amongst those who understand the matter the impression is that it will come to an end with the payment next year.

Vote *agreed to.*

CLASS V.—FOREIGN AND COLONIAL SERVICES.

(9.) Motion made, and Question proposed,

> "That a sum, not exceeding £104,524, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1888, for the Expenses of Her Majesty's Embassies and Missions Abroad."

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

(SIR JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): I am anxious to offer to the Committee a little explanation of a statement I made the other night. In the course of the debate reference was made to the cost of the European Army in Egypt, and I stated, without particular reference to the figures, that the cost of the Army of Occupation in Egypt would be only about £98,000. I had the figures before me when I stated that; but those figures rather referred to the sum to which it was hoped the charge for the Army of Occupation might be brought down than to the actual sum to which it had been reduced. I hope the Committee will give me credit for desiring to give it every possible information in my power on that subject, and I certainly feel it my duty to say that on that point I mis-stated the fact, because at the present moment the cost of the Army of Occupation in Egypt is not brought down much below £200,000. But all the circumstances connected with it are under the strict examination of the Treasury and the War Department, with certain assistance from the Foreign Office, which I hope may bring the cost down to a considerably lower sum, and the amount which I stated the other day is that to which we hope to bring it down. But, in saying that to the Committee, I think it right to observe that, of course, I do not pretend to be intimately acquainted with the finances of Egypt, which are not under the direct control of Her Majesty's Government. My desire is to give all the information in my power; but all the details of this matter are in the hands of the Egyptian Government, and are not controlled by us.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): Will the right hon. Gentleman tell us whether the Egyptian Government are to pay, or are not to pay, the £200,000 included in the Estimates? The calculation of the right hon. Gentleman the other day on this matter struck me as being very extraordinary. The sum of £200,000 stands in this year's Estimate as the amount which the Egyptian Government are to pay this country for the European Army, the cost of which is more than £100 per man; and I ask the right hon. Gentleman to tell us whether that £200,000 will be received, or is to be cut down?

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: Her Majesty's Government have recognized, as I informed the House last February, that this country ought not to bear any charge for the occupation of Egypt, beyond the normal charge for the battalions employed there, and that any extra charge for the Army of Occupation ought to be borne by the Government of that country. It is difficult to state at any particular time what the charge for the Army of Occupation will be throughout the year, and it is still more difficult to bring that charge per man within that sum which is usually thought sufficient for the maintenance of a British Force, and for this reason—that the number of troops in Egypt is dependent on the requirements of the country and the interests of its security. The troops, as I told the Committee the other night, have been constantly reduced, first from 16,000 to 13,000, then from 13,000 to 9,000, then from 9,000 to 5,000, and now from 5,000 to 4,500, approximately; but it is very difficult, as the battalions are reduced, to reduce the Staff and Commissariat Establishment. Therefore, it might well appear that the cost per man is high compared to the numerical proportions of the reduced Force. Of course, all the Establishment ought to be reduced proportionately; and I can only say, having had the advantage of conferring with the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) and with others on the subject, that there is a great desire to reduce the Force as far as it can be reduced with safety. We have done a great deal in the direction of reducing it since Her Majesty's Government came into Office. We have reduced it by half, and, as I said the other night, it is not intended that the present Establishment shall remain where it is. But it is impossible to say with any confidence that the rate per man is what it should be, or what it will be within a few months. The Government are doing their utmost to bring the Force down to safe limits, and I hope that another year will show a very material reduction. There are a great many things to be dealt with, such as the barrack department, prisons, military law, and so forth, and we have to proceed step by step; but I hope the Committee will believe that Her Majesty's Government are doing their utmost to bring this Force down to an amount which it is possible for Egypt to pay, and which is no more than necessary for the protection of the country.

The cost, whatever it is, of the troops will be paid by the Government of Egypt.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL: I do not think the right hon. Gentleman has apprehended the question. He was in India when this matter was settled; but no doubt the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) will remember what occurred. I appreciate what is said of the efforts of the Government to reduce the Army in Egypt; but I would impress upon the right hon. Gentleman that the contract we made with the Egyptian Government that they should pay £4 per month per man to cover all the extra charge of our remaining in Egypt. The proviso was that, however large the number of troops, the amount of the burden should not exceed £200,000. I wish to know if the Egyptian Government are to be released from their contract with regard to the payment of £4 per man?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen) (St. George's, Hanover Square): It is the decision of Her Majesty's Government that for this year and the coming year the Egyptian Government shall not pay more than the exact extra cost of the Army of Occupation; and when troops are removed, and that extra cost falls below the £200,000, then the Egyptian Government is to have the benefit which will result. The English taxpayer is not to pay any portion of the extra cost of the Army in Egypt, nor is Egypt to pay one farthing more than the extra cost. We hope that the cost will be below the £200,000 which the Egyptian Government have contracted to pay.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL: By whom has this been calculated?

Mr. GOSCHEN: By the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope), with his advisers, checked by the Treasury, and with the distinct desire, under a pledge which I will give my hon. Friend and the Committee, that there will be nothing whatever charged to the Egyptian Government beyond the fair amount for that extra cost. The examination of the matter has been conducted in the spirit that Egypt shall not have to complain of any undue charge.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL: I want to know what the British taxpayer will have to pay?

Mr. GOSCHEN: We intend to hold an even balance between the two parties. The hon. Member first asks me about the burden of Egypt, and complains of its being too heavy. I tell him that Egypt will be treated fairly, and then he turns round and says that we must consider the English taxpayer. Well, a fair arrangement will be made between the two. I will not admit that any cost should be put on the taxpayer for the occupation of Egypt; but, at the same time, Egypt will be charged only the precise sum extra spent in consequence of the occupation. As a Minister of the Crown, and as responsible, to some extent, for treating Egypt fairly in this matter, I must say that we do not desire to make anything out of Egypt, but to charge her exactly the sum which may be regarded as the extra cost.

Mr. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): I do not desire to resume the debate we had last Saturday upon Egypt, because I think the views of both sides of the House had fair expression then. I will only say, referring to the explanation given by the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson), that I think, if he is going to make an explanation, he should give us a little more indication than was given on Saturday in reply to numerous questions as to the course the Government intend to pursue during the next six months. He gave us little or no information as to whether or not it was contemplated to resume negotiations with France or the Porte on the basis of the lately attempted, but now extinct, Convention. I desire to call the attention of the Committee, however, to two other points—and I should not have referred to the first of them if it had not been for the somewhat cavalier answer given by the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary to a Question of mine a few days ago as to a reported conflict between the Christian and Mahommedan populations at Amasia, in Asia Minor, arising out of an outrage reported to have been perpetrated by the Turkish Governor of the town. The right hon. Gentleman said it was no matter what outrages occurred, and he treated the matter in the well-known style of the "Coffee-house babble"—language used by Lord Beaconsfield on a famous occasion in 1876. The right hon. Baronet the Under Secretary was in India at that time, and perhaps he does not realize the feeling that was created by the way in which the then Prime Minister treated the first accounts that reached this country of the Bulgarian massacres. He does not now realize how much inflammable matter there is in Asia Minor. By the Treaty of Berlin this country, as one of the signatory Powers, has undertaken duties towards the Christian population of Asia Minor, and the Sultan has promised to introduce certain reforms, and to report the progress which is made in the application of these reforms. I am well aware of the difficulties which surround the matter; but the Sultan has not introduced these reforms, and is not likely to do so, and I think we are entitled to expect that Her Majesty's Government will do their best to endeavour to diminish the existing evils, and when they find Turkish Governors committing outrages that they will remonstrate with those Governors, and when they find conflicts are arising in a district like Asia Minor, where we know the use which has been made of outrages to endeavour to prevent the restoration of peace and good order in these countries, we think it is the imperative duty of the Government to see to the matter. I do not know whether the report I have referred to has been confirmed; but I think, as the right hon. Gentleman seemed to imply that Her Majesty's Government has no duty in the matter, it would be as well for me to remind him that such matters were dealt with in the Treaty of Berlin, and if conflicts are to be apprehended which would lead to the danger of the occupation of Armenia by any other Power, we shall require a strict account from the Government of the steps they have taken in order to avoid dangers which are sufficiently palpable. Now I turn to another subject, and I want to say a few words on the question of the occupation of the New Hebrides by France. I understand that the Government do not think it desirable to give us any further information as to those negotiations, and I shall not press them for any information if they, as Ministers of the Crown, tell us that it would be undesirable, and would retard the prospects of a settlement, for them to tell us in exactly what state the negotiations now are. I will not ask them to do so; but I feel bound, in the interests of our Colonies, and on behalf of those on this side of the House who feel with myself on the question, to call the attention of the Committee to the grave position in which the matter stands. The people of our Australian Colonies are very deeply interested in the condition of the Islands lying near Australia—they are very keenly and justifiably interested in them. There was a discussion at the late Colonial Conference on the subject, and that discussion was of so vivacious a character that Her Majesty's Government have not deemed it expedient to publish in the proceedings of the Conference any Report of that discussion; but we have since heard of what has been said by some delegates who attended the Conference, and we know how warm their feelings are. Now, our Colonial fellow-subjects have no representation in this House, and they have no voice in connection with the foreign policy of this country. They trust entirely to the House of Commons and the public opinion of England to see that their interests are properly safeguarded; and I submit, in this condition of affairs, it becomes an unusually solemn duty of this House to see that the interests of our Colonies do not suffer through their non-representation. We are bound, as far as we can, to put them in the same position that they would be in if they had Representatives sitting in this House side by side with the Representatives of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and, Sir, no reason stronger can be supposed than that which we have for securing and preserving the good-will of our Colonies. We have seen how great their attachment to their Mother Country is. We know that their future connection with us—a connection which I hold to be of the utmost benefit to both them and us—depends largely on maintaining sentiments of cordiality towards and confidence in the Mother Country, and we ought to be specially anxious to safeguard their interests in every particular as much as we would safeguard the interests of these British Islands themselves. Now, what are the facts with regard to the French in the New Hebrides? A simple narrative of the facts makes the case stronger than any comment I could add. In 1878 the French Government, alarmed by articles they had read in the Australian newspapers suggesting the annexation of the New Hebrides by ourselves, addressed representations to Her Majesty's Government on the subject, and asked us to join with them in declaring that both countries would respect the independence of the New Hebrides, and would not seek to occupy them or establish a Protectorate over them. Now, the Committee will observe——

DR. CLARK (Caithness): I rise to a point of Order. I understood the Motion before the Committee was an Amendment by the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy, and that he has refused to withdraw that Amendment. I should like to know whether the discussion of the question of the New Hebrides is in Order upon the Amendment?

THE CHAIRMAN: Amendments in Supply do not survive from one Sitting to another. That Amendment is not now before the Committee.

MR. BRYCE: The Committee will observe that that proposal was voluntary on the part of France. We did not ask France to agree to neutralize the New Hebrides; but France suggested that both countries should respect her independence. Therefore, in 1878, we entered into an agreement of that kind with France, and we sent out word to the Colonies to that effect, thereby giving a pledge that our policy was to be one of non-occupation on our own part, and that there was to be no occupation on the part of France. That agreement was renewed in 1883 by what is known as a *Note Verbale* on the part of the two Governments. Nothing happened until January, 1886, when the French Government asked us whether we would consent to waive this agreement, and permit them to occupy the New Hebrides, the consideration they offered being that they would send no more convicts to New Caledonia. We sent that proposal to the Colonies for their consideration. The Colonies objected very strongly to it, and it was accordingly dropped. We come now to June, 1886; and what happened in that month? Why, in June last we received news from Australia, coming along with angry protests on the part of the Colonists, that a French expedition had started for the New Hebrides, carrying both troops and materials for erecting barracks. Lord Rosebery was Foreign Secretary at that time, and he telegraphed in a most energetic manner to France, and followed that up by the despatch of some British vessels of war to the New Hebrides, with orders to see and watch what was being done. The French Government admitted that they were bound by the Agreements of 1878 and 1883, and promised that they would withdraw their troops, saying that they had only sent them there for the protection of the French settlers, there having been some murders committed there by the Natives. The French Government then said they did not contemplate occupation, and they did not intend to depart from the obligation they had contracted. In the autumn of the same year the Foreign Office was in the hands of Lord Salisbury, and he proposed a scheme of joint naval protection, by which the Naval Forces of both countries would form a sort of police, and protect European settlers from the Natives. The French Government accepted these proposals, and approved of the basis of agreement which was sent to France in October. On the 1st of November, however, the French Government sent a counter-proposal. We replied on the 26th November, and from that time to now there has been really, so far as I know, no answer on the part of France—or, at any rate, there has been no answer communicated to this House. The Colonial Memorandum presented to the Colonial delegates by the Colonial Office says that on the 19th February Lord Salisbury pressed for an answer, and that the French Government replied that an answer would be sent immediately, and on the 9th of March the French Government said that they would send instructions to their Ambassador here; but after the 9th March we know nothing, because my right hon. Friend the Under Secretary of State (Sir James Fergusson), no doubt, in the judicious exercise of his official discretion, has given no answer to the repeated Questions addressed to him, but has only told us that negotiations are proceeding, and that he hopes the matter will soon be settled. So late as last November a batch of French convicts were sent to New Caledonia, and every batch of convicts which goes out increases the alarm and anxiety of the Colonists, because it increases the stock of dangerous characters who are always likely to disgorge themselves on the Australian Coasts; and we learn from the French newspapers from time to time that groups of French Colonists go out and settle in the New Hebrides. My right hon. Friend answered the

Question put to him yesterday by the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) to the effect that there was nothing in the Agreement between the two countries bearing on colonization. That is quite true—there is nothing in the Agreement that precludes the subjects of either country settling in the Islands; but, at the same time, it is easy to see that the settlement of French Colonists there is not without its significance. Every settlement of French Colonists that occurs is taken by the French as a further step towards annexation, and every fresh batch of French Colonists produces greater anxiety in the Colonial mind. It is in that state of facts that we have to act. The French Government are continuing to evade the demands which Her Majesty's Government have made for an immediate and separate settlement. We understand, from the answer given by the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary himself, that the French Government are endeavouring to mix up the question of the evacuation of the New Hebrides with the question of the Suez Canal and the settlement of Egypt. I hope that every suggestion of that character will be resisted by Her Majesty's Government. They admit they have no objection to discuss the questions together.

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON: At the same time.

Mr. BRYCE: That is what I intended to convey. I quite admit Her Majesty's Government have not admitted that they were going to treat the two matters as one; but unless some care is taken to show that in the view of the Government the matters are entirely distinct, and that nothing done in one is to be regarded as a consideration for the other, there is a serious danger that we may be drawn into making a sort of bargain. That is just what I think the country and this House ought to resist. I cannot imagine a clearer diplomatic case than that which we possess as regards the New Hebrides—it is a clear case on the admission of France herself; it is a case which we have no need to mix up with any diplomatic dispute in any other part of the world, and which ought to be settled on its own merits. There is a rumour—I hope an unfounded rumour—that Her Majesty's Government have thought of making some concession to France in some other part of the Pacific in return for France immediately quitting the New Hebrides. I cannot help thinking that any concession of that kind would be regarded with great regret by this country. If we have any right in any other part of the Pacific which the French wish us to yield; if sufficient cause is shown for yielding it; if we get a substantial advantage by yielding it; if, as happened in another case of which the right hon. Gentleman knows, we make a concession of some right to France in some other part of the Pacific, and it is to be made conditional upon France giving something up to us, the country might not object to such a bargain. It would depend whether the consideration was worth what we gave for it. But what I believe the country will disapprove of is that the Government, having a clear right somewhere else in the Pacific, should surrender it to France upon the condition that she evacuates the New Hebrides. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will be able to assure us that no such bargain is in the contemplation of Her Majesty's Government, because, if it is, I shall ask the Committee to express disapproval of it. I trust the Government will not think I have gone at all beyond the needs of the case in having said so much. I have not wished to interfere in any way with any current negotiations; but feeling the great gravity of the matter, and feeling also the great importance of firmness in this matter, believing that a firm, clear, and simple course is also a safe one, and that our negotiations will be best conducted, if we say distinctly what we mean, and let it be understood that we will be satisfied with nothing else, feeling also that we are under very serious liabilities to our Australian Colonies in this matter, that we owe a duty to them, and to that splendid future which we anticipate for them, I hope the Government will be able to give us satisfactory assurances, and that they will very soon satisfy the Colonists with the news that the obligation of France has been fulfilled, and that the New Hebrides have been evacuated.

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON: I am quite aware that on Saturday I replied very inadequately upon some of the points of the speech of my hon. Friend the late Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce). It was not because I undervalued the importance of the matters referred to. It is well known we had some hope of passing the Vote on which we were engaged, and that I could not very well engage the attention of the Committee longer than I did. My hon. Friend has not complained of that; but he has referred to one point which I think he alluded to in the discussion on Saturday, and upon which a reply was not given. He asked about the future negotiations as regards the Turkish Convention. I have stated most distinctly, in answer to Questions put to me by hon. Members, that there are no negotiations proceeding at present, and that there is no likelihood of any early negotiations with regard to this matter. Her Majesty's Government have endeavoured to fulfil their duties to their allies, and particularly to the Sublime Porte, in meeting their wishes and endeavouring to satisfy them on the subject as to the evacuation of Egypt. Unfortunately, these negotiations failed. Her Majesty's Government have resumed the duties that they undertook in Egypt, and are endeavouring, as far as their influence goes, to assist that country to assume a condition in which it may be possible for us to depart from it without a promise as to a date or limitation of time. That is all the answer I can give on that point. Now he says I did not the other day reply to a Question he put to me as to the outrage reported to have taken place in Asia Minor. I did not at all intend to convey to my hon. Friend that Her Majesty's Government had no obligation in connection with Asia Minor, or that they were indifferent to the condition of the populations there. But the Question put to me was with reference to a rumour that had been repeated by a newspaper correspondent at Constantinople — a rumour that there had been some outrage, and that the Governor of the place had been implicated in it. The request was made that we should communicate with Constantinople on the subject, and, if necessary, demand the dismissal of the Governor.

Mr. BRYCE: If the rumour proved to be well founded.

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON: To have entered into the hypothetical engagement that we would ask for the dismissal of a Governor of a Province, if he was found to have misbehaved himself, would have been a very unwise engagement indeed. I thought that at least we ought to wait until the rumour—for it was only a rumour—was confirmed. Well, Sir, I read in the same newspaper a few days afterwards that the rumour was said to be totally unfounded, and I think that justified my reserve. Her Majesty's Government have received no news whatever of the circumstances, and my refusal to give any engagement of the kind does not at all imply indifference on the part of Her Majesty's Government in the question ultimately concerned. I think this ought to be sufficient explanation.

Mr. BRYCE: Allow me to say that I did not complain at all of the right hon. Baronet not undertaking to give an engagement. I only asked him to ascertain what were the facts. I did not ask for any pledge.

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON: That I perfectly understand; but I think it was quite premature that, upon the strength of a newspaper report, I should be asked to enter into the engagement. I must say, with all due respect to my hon. Friend, that to give the undertaking desired would be to go beyond the province of Her Majesty's Government, and would not be in accordance with an attitude of prudence towards a friendly Power. Now, as to the hon. Gentleman's observations in regard to the question of the New Hebrides, I have no complaint to make. The question is one which must necessarily attract considerable interest in this country; and beyond that the great degree in which it engages the notice of the Australian Colonists must render it a topic to which attention must be called when an opportunity occurs for debate. The hon. Gentleman referred to the discussion which is said to have taken place at the Colonial Conference. For reasons which I think all must admit were sufficient, the deliberations of that Conference were not made public; and I must say that the rumours which have got afloat of what passed in that Conference are extremely exaggerated—almost untrue—in the particulars which attracted most attention. No doubt, those who represented the Colonies expressed themselves forcibly on the subject, and I think it is of great advantage that the intelligent and eminent men who represented the Colonies did not hesitate to express themselves frankly to Her Majesty's Government as to the feeling of the Colonies on questions most intimately concerning the Colonies they represented. If the Government had been at all insensible on these matters, they would have been impressed, I think, by the manner in which they were brought to their attention at the Colonial Conference. I myself am, perhaps, as much acquainted as any Member of this House with the feelings of the Colonists on these questions. I have passed six or seven years in the Colonies, and thoroughly understand and appreciate the feelings of the Colonists upon them; but, at the same time, we must also regard and consider the feelings of foreign countries on these questions. It must be evident that other countries, having a sense of power and a desire of expansion, must desire to occupy the unsettled lands of the world, and I think we ought to have certain consideration for the susceptibilities of foreign countries. Now, as regards the New Hebrides. It is true, as my hon. Friend (Mr. Bryce) says, that certain engagements have been entered into between Great Britain and France as to the occupation of the New Hebrides. The French Government held that the protection of their subjects in the New Hebrides required a temporary occupation by a military force. Her Majesty's Government could not look without serious doubt upon the continued presence of a military force in a group of islands which had been agreed upon between the two countries should be permanently neutral, and therefore successive Administrations have urged upon the French Government the necessity of each nation fulfilling its pledge to the other. The French Government have never denied the weight of the obligation they entered into. In the course of last year negotiations took place with a view to the protection of the settlers in those islands; and it is evident that, as far as settlement has gone, there must be some protection for the subjects of either nation. It is no wonder that the Australian Colonists should object to the continuance of a military force there, and Her Majesty's Government have not hesitated to represent to the French Government that the continued presence of a military force there, and the delay in the settlement of those permanent arrangements to which my hon. Friend has referred, has given uneasiness to the Australian Colonists and to the people of this country. Now, my hon. Friend has said I have shown a judicious official reserve in not giving the Committee more information on this subject. My hon. Friend knows perfectly well that when correspondence is going on between two great Powers upon a question so important — not important in itself, but important because it touches closely the national feelings of the two countries—it is impossible to give detailed information to Parliament, and to place correspondence in an incomplete form before the House. I am sure my hon. Friend cannot seriously make complaint against Her Majesty's Government, because they have not made known to the House the course of the correspondence. But, Sir, this I can say, there has been no connection admitted between the question of the New Hebrides and that of the neutralization of the Suez Canal. I have admitted that Her Majesty's Government have not objected to discuss the two questions at the same time, and I ask the Committee if it would be possible, when there are two questions each of which is of great importance to the country, that the discussion of one should be delayed until the other has been settled? It may be that the French Government, attaching great importance to the Suez Canal business, has a desire to press this question forward more rapidly than the other; but, as I have told the Committee, Her Majesty's Government have never admitted that the New Hebrides question can depend upon any other question whatever. Her Majesty's Government have urged upon the French Government the fulfilment of those arrangements, which are in the interest of both countries, without reference to any other question whatever. The question of the colonization of the New Hebrides forms no part of the agreement between the two countries, and we should be absolutely going beyond our rights if we were to object to any settlement in the New Hebrides. The question is, how the emigrants or settlers shall be protected, and the Government of France have had great difficulty in this matter, which cannot be unknown to the students of European politics. But we have received from them and from their Ambassador in this country, assurances of that friendship which I trust will remain long between these two countries which are such near neighbours, and which may be neighbours at this end of the world, as well as at the other, without their fair rivalries degenerating into animosities.

MR. LABOUCHERE: I sincerely hope the Government will not yield to the request of my hon. Friend the Member for South Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce), and ask for the dismissal of the Turkish Governor in Asia Minor. I know of no reason why we should interfere in Asia Minor any more than we should interfere in Japan or China. We constantly get into difficulties owing to interference with other Governments. We have frequently got into difficulties with Turkey; and we should get into great difficulties if we were to take it into our heads that it was our duty to protect the Armenians for instance. We should get into endless difficulty if, whenever we thought a Turkish Governor had done wrong, we demanded his dismissal. The hon. Member for South Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce) cites the Treaty of Berlin; but it cannot be doubted that it would be most undesirable to make the demand which he suggests. It will be remembered that when we took Cyprus, the Turks undertook to make certain reforms in Asia Minor. In consideration of that, we agreed to make a Defensive Treaty with Turkey as regards Asia Minor. If we acted upon that Treaty, if we, in the exercise of our right, called upon Turkey to dismiss a Governor of whom we disapproved, we shall fully recognize at the present moment the obligation of the Treaty. What should we think if France or Russia were to demand the dismissal of any Governor in Asia Minor, without consulting us? In point of fact, the Turk would not be able to govern his own country, if any one of the Signatory Powers to the Treaty of Berlin were on their own initiative to claim the right to interfere with the Government of Turkey by demanding the dismissal of a certain Governor. Now, the only plea we should have for action in this matter would be the exercise of the Treaty by which we obtained Cyprus, and by which it was agreed that in consideration of our obtaining Cyprus, and in consideration of the Turks making reforms in Asia Minor, we should defend Asia Minor for the Turks against all comers. I think that we should in making this demand upon Turkey be acting upon the Cyprus Treaty, and not upon the Berlin Treaty, and if we do act upon it, the Turks will have a right to demand a *quid pro quo*—namely, the defence of Asia Minor against Russia or any other Power which attacks it. That is why I hope the Government will think twice before they make this demand upon the Turkish Government. With regard to the New Hebrides, it certainly does seem to me that the position of France towards the New Hebrides and towards us is very like our position towards Egypt and towards France. France has occupied the New Hebrides, and she will not leave. What is our position in Egypt? When we sent troops to Egypt, we pledged ourselves that the occupation would only be temporary. We are calling upon France to evacuate the New Hebrides, and complaining that they are acting contrary to their pledges. The French are calling upon us to evacuate Egypt, and say we are acting contrary to our pledges. It seems to me that we should fulfil our own pledges towards other countries, before we hope other countries will fulfil their pledges to us. I perfectly understand what the right. hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) means, when he says that two matters are being negotiated at the same time, and yet separately. I agree with him entirely that it would be absurd, because we are in Egypt, to refuse to negotiate at the same time with respect to the Suez Canal and the New Hebrides. But the two things ought to be kept entirely separate; and I think, considering the strong feeling that exists in Australia with regard to the question of the New Hebrides, we ought to use exceptional endeavours—I am not talking about going to war, but I refer to diplomatic endeavours—in order to induce the French to withdraw from the position which is of such concern to Australia, and to the Empire at large. I hope the Government will not relax their efforts to do their best to bring about a satisfactory settlement of this question.

MR. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee): Mr. Courtney, I beg to move the reduction of the Vote by the sum of £100, part of the salary of our Ambassador in France. I need hardly say I do not make this Motion as an attack upon the amount of that salary, although I think the salary of our Ambassador in France—and, indeed, of every Ambassador whose name figures in this list—is so great that the House might reasonably consider whether it ought not to be seriously cut down. My object is to invite the attention of the Committee to the conduct of Her Majesty's Government in refusing to take part in the approaching International Exhibition at Paris, on the ground that it is intended as a commemoration of the French Revolution. I assure the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) that, in consideration of the lateness of the hour (11.55), and also the lateness of the Session, I shall compress what I have to say on this subject within the smallest possible compass. I assure hon. Members opposite that I do not mean to make this a Party question, because I grieve to say that from my reading of the correspondence on this subject, I find that the Liberal Government who preceded the present Government is almost, if not quite, as much to blame in the matter as Her Majesty's present Advisers are. I will not trouble the Committee by going through the Correspondence which was laid on the Table the other day by the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) relating to this matter. But if the Committee will permit me, I will state in a few words the main points of the Correspondence. The Correspondence began so long ago as November, 1884, when an official document announcing the holding of the Exhibition was sent to Her Majesty's Government. In that document, the French Minister observes that the date 1889 is the proper date for this Exhibition—firstly, because it is the end of the usual interval of 11 years which is allowed to elapse between Exhibitions of this character in France; and, secondly, because it is the anniversary of the Hegira of French patriotism. On the 12th February, 1886, the Earl of Rosebery, writing to Lord Lyons, asked whether the Exhibition was intended to be a celebration of the Revolution of 1789. That is the beginning of the objection taken by Her Majesty's Government, and on which Her Majesty's Government have acted in refusing to take part in this celebration. M. Waddington, in his despatch soliciting the co-operation of our Government, recognized the fact that upon the valuable co-operation of this country depended, in a great part, the success of this work of peace and industry. It was added that, if England took no official part in the Exhibition, the French Government would give all facilities to British exhibitors. Very well, that is really the whole of the matter. What does it come to? This, that the British Government have refused the courteous invitation of the Government of France to take part in a great international work of peace and industry because of the coincidence in date with the centenary of the Revolution of 1789. I say that is an unworthy position for the Government of a free country to take up, whether that Government for the moment be a Liberal or a Conservative Government; and I would contrast it for a moment with the attitude taken by the Liberal Government who were contemporary with the very events which occurred. If the House will permit me, I will read a single sentence from the history of the lamented Mr. Green. He says—

> "The States General no sooner met at Versailles in May, 1789, than the fabric of despotism and privilege began to crumble. A rising in Paris destroyed the Bastille, and the capture of this fortress was taken for the sign of a new era of constitutional freedom for France and for Europe. Everywhere men thrilled with a strange joy at the tidings of its fall. 'How much is this the greatest event that ever happened in the world!' Fox cried, with a burst of enthusiam; 'and how much the least!'"

That is what was said by the Leader of the Liberal Party 100 years ago, when these events were happening; and what one of the noblest of the Liberal Leaders was not afraid to look upon with satisfaction, his degenerate successors 100 years afterwards were afraid even to associate themselves with in such an indirect way as to participate in an International work of peace and industry which happens to take place 100 years after these great events. I say, as I have already said, that I blame both the late and the present Government for their discourteous refusal, as I cannot help thinking it is, to take part in this Exhibition. But the present Government are mainly responsible, for it is they who gave the refusal. By taking part in this Exhibition, by accepting the invitation in the terms and the spirit in which it was offered, I say they would not have been committing themselves to anything; but by refusing, they committed themselves and the country to a verdict upon an historical event which happened 100 years ago, which verdict distorts and misrepresents the real feeling of the country on this subject. I am sorry, Sir, that two of my right hon. Friends on the Front Bench on this side of the House are not present—my right hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Mr. John Morley), who made his reputation by studying the subject I am discussing, and who, I am sure, would protest against the course adopted by the Government; and my right hon. Friend the Member for the Bridgeton Division of Glasgow (Sir George Trevelyan), who is a historian who was not afraid to express his opinion and approval of the events which, 100 years afterwards, his friends in politics are afraid even to touch. But I hope there are some Liberal Members—there may be some Tory Members—who are willing and anxious to protest against the misrepresentation of Liberal feeling and public feeling in this country which has taken place through the action of the Government on this question. For myself, I can only say I feel so strongly that an act of discourtesy has been offered to the French Government, and that the feeling of Liberalism has been misrepresented—I feel so strongly on this, that if I can get anyone to go into the Lobby with me, I shall push this matter to a Division.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Item A, Salaries, &c., be reduced by the sum of £100, part of the Salary of the Ambassador at Paris."—(*Mr. E. Robertson.*)

Mr. BRYCE: Before the debate goes further, and my right hon. Friend (Sir James Fergusson) answers on the part of the Government, I wish to correct the entire misapprehension under which my hon. and learned Friend (Mr. E. Robertson) labours. He said just now that the late Government refused to participate in the Exhibition. The late Government did nothing of the kind. What we did was to ask a question, which I think was a very proper question; we asked what the Exhibition was to be, and the occasion of it. There was nothing in our question to convey any indication of what our attitude would be, and I can assure the Committee there was no resolution taken by Her Majesty's Government or the late Foreign Secretary. The question asked was — "What is the nature of the Exhibition to be; is it to be a celebration of the Revolution?" The answer given to that was, that it did not pretend to be a celebration of the Revolution of 1789; but that one of the reasons for choosing the year 1889 for the Exhibition was that that date coincided with the centenary year of the Revolution. So far as my own knowledge of the facts goes, I am inclined to believe that we might have taken part in the Exhibition; and the mere fact that it was to take place on the centenary of the Revolution of 1789 was no reason that we should not. It is not as if the French had wished to celebrate the centenary of 1793; the principles of 1789 are one thing, and the acts of 1793 are another; and there is nothing in the circumstances of 1789 that might not find perfect sympathy on this side of the Channel. There are many here who sympathize with the ideas and even the events of 1789; but, with our mixed feelings about the French Revolution, it would not have been advisable to go further. I do not, however, desire to join in the discussion generally; but I wished to explain that my hon. and learned Friend is mistaken in supposing there was any refusal to take part in the Exhibition given by the late Government.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen) (St. George's, Hanover Square): Would my hon. and learned Friend state what was the object of the question put by the late Government to the Government of France? Was it put with a view of ascertaining whether the Government might join in the celebration of the Revolution of 1789; was it put with the view of stimulating the Government to join in the celebration, or was it merely a question of curiosity?

Mr. BRYCE: My right hon. Friend is fond, as the Committee knows, of asking questions; but I should have thought the object was one that hardly required his keen intellect to discover. We asked the question to ascertain whether it was to be purely and simply a celebration of the Revolution of 1789, or merely whether the date fixed upon happened to coincide with the date of the Revolution. It was a natural wish on our part to know whether the Exhibition was to be held for the purpose of commemorating the Revolution, which would have made it a distinctly political celebration, or whether it was primarily an industrial undertaking which happened to coincide in date with the centenary of the Revolution. There is all the difference in the world between the two things, and the answer of the French Government indicated that although one of the reasons for choosing the year 1889 was its coincidence with the centenary of 1789, the exhibition was not to be a political celebration.

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON: I should regret if anything said on this question should tend to accentuate the refusal of Her Majesty's Government to take part in the Centenary Exhibition of 1789. The hon. and learned Member for Dundee referred in terms to the invitation conveyed by the French Ambassador in London; but he did not read, I think, the precise words employed by M. Waddington in that invitation, the closing paragraph of which said—

> "In the event of the Government of the Queen not being able to afford official participation, the French Government would receive with satisfaction the assurance of their unofficial support, and in giving all publicity to the documents relating to the Exhibition, and in guaranteeing British subjects all necessary facilities in regard to carriage and Customs' duties."

There was nothing official or unofficial to commit the Government to any line of policy; but the French Government thought it very probable, from the communications which passed two years before, that the Government would not be inclined to take part in an Exhibition that had any direct reference to the Revolution. The Prime Minister replied, in terms studiously courteous, and calculated not to give any offence to the French Government, and which I am certain has not produced any. He says—

> "With reference to my note of the 28th March, I have now the honour to inform your Excellency that Her Majesty's Government do not propose to avail themselves of the invitation which the French Government have been so good as to address to them, to take an official part in the International Exhibition which is to be held at Paris in 1889. In making this announcement, M. l'Ambassadeur, I beg to assure you, and I have the honour to request that you will convey this assurance to the French Government, that Her Majesty's Government will be very happy to afford every facility to exhibitors who may be desirous of sending their goods, or of contributing in other respects to the proposed undertaking."

Well, Sir, there is no ground for the allegation that there is any discourtesy or coldness to the French Government in that reply. My hon. and learned Friend says there was no peculiar political significance. Well, the French Government never made any concealment of the matter, for they say the year 1889—

> "Was marked out as the close of a further period of 11 or 12 years which has elapsed between recent Exhibitions. It was still more clearly marked as coinciding with the centenary of a Hegirah dear to French patriotism."

I have stated in this House, on the part of Her Majesty's Government, that they did not think it right to take part in a political celebration—no doubt industrial, but also distinctly political—upon which a difference of opinion must prevail in a foreign country. It may not matter whether the majority be one side or the other, it would be contrary to the habit and policy of the Government of this country to concern itself intimately with political affairs in a foreign country; and I am sure, upon reflection, that will be considered as a wise decision on the part of the Government. The Earl of Rosebery was a wise and judicious Foreign Minister, and the question asked by him was wise and prudent; and the Committee may see a continuity of policy in this matter. I hope the Committee, by no expressions, will accentuate the refusal that the Government thought it their duty to give. The dissent has given no offence on the other side of the Channel, and I hope not on this.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: I sincerely trust my hon. and learned Friend (Mr. E. Robertson) will divide. It is all very well to talk about accentuating the refusal; but I hope, even at this late period of the Session, the Committee will testify against such an announcement as that of the right hon. Gentleman, who has tried to throw a species of responsibility upon the Members of the late Government. My hon. Friend the Member for South Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce), as the exponent of the late Government, has stated that had the question been put fairly to the late Government, whether they would take part, officially or not, in the Exhibition, they would have assented to it.

Mr. BRYCE: I did not say anything of the kind; I said that no decision had been arrived at, and that the time had not come, when the late Government quitted Office, at which it had become necessary to decide.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: I say they would have assented to it, because they depended upon the support of the Radicals in this House, and they would not have had that support if they had not; and we know in the end they were ready to recognize the position of the Radicals. A Radical Government refuse to take part in celebrating the anniversary of one of the noblest deeds ever done! It was a deed which I should have thought even the hon. Gentleman opposite the hon. Member for Mid Leicestershire (Mr. De Lisle), would have recognized as one which was for the benefit of the whole human race. It is not a question of our recognizing as right everything that was done during the French Revolution; but a question of our recognizing that this was a great and advantageous deed for France itself. Why, even Louis XVI. regarded it himself as an advantageous deed, for entering Paris immediately afterwards, surrounded by his faithful Parisians, he went to the Hôtel de Ville, where he made a speech and congratulated the Parisians upon the taking of the Bastille—[An hon. Member: He was forced.] That may be so; but still he did it. I am really surprised at the reason that has been given by the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. He said—"We will not take part in any political anniversary." The Jubilee was a political anniversary, the Coronation is a political event, and yet we know very well that Foreign Governments, although they may be Republican, take part in political events that are in their very nature part and parcel of the system of Royalty. We may be Royalists or Republicans; that is not the question. In France there is a Republic, and yet the right hon. Gentleman says the Republic is approved of by all the Royalists of France. [Sir James Fergusson: I did not.] You said the same thing. Do you mean to tell me there is a single person in France who does not approve of it? If there is, it is someone opposed to the system of government in that country; and, because there may be these loyal citizens, you think it your duty to say the British Government ought not to associate with them, and refuse to take part in any Exhibition, though it meets with the approval of Bonapartists and Royalists as well as Republicans. I hope my hon. and learned Friend will go to a Division; and if he does, I shall never have given a vote with more sincerity than I shall give on this occasion as a protest against the action of the Government.

Sir CHARLES DALRYMPLE (Ipswich): The hon. Gentleman (Mr. Labouchere) recognizes in the Jubilee celebration an analogy, as I understand it, to the commemoration to be held in Paris in 1889. I am not aware that the Jubilee celebration was the commemoration of a revolution 50 years ago; and therefore I scarcely see where the analogy is. But I rose for the purpose of referring for a moment to the remark of the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Dundee (Mr. E. Robertson). I agree with the hon. Gentleman that the present Liberal Party are the degenerate successors of Mr. Fox. Would anyone have believed that the hon. Gentleman the Member for South Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce) was in favour of accepting the invitation of the French Government? As I understood him, he said that the Earl of Rosebery only asked the date of the Exhibition. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer asked him the object of the inquiry about the date; but we did not derive any explanation of the Earl of Rosebery's inquiry. When the hon. Member for Northampton said that the hon. Member would have assented, the hon. Member for South Aberdeen rises and says—"I said nothing of the kind."

Mr. BRYCE: I did not say that. I am unwilling to trouble the Committee again, but the hon. Baronet is entirely mis-stating what I said.

Sir CHARLES DALRYMPLE: Then why was it necessary to rise and correct the hon. Member for Northampton. The fact is, that the late Government did not intend to accept the invitation; but the hon. Gentleman has used the incident for the sake of chastising Her Majesty's present Advisers, though if they had remained in Office they would have done nothing different. For my part, I think it would be better if my right hon. Friend and Relative (Sir James Fergusson) forbore to answer the statements of hon. Gentlemen opposite, for then they would answer one another, as on this occasion, and so the subject might be settled.

Question put.

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 50; Noes 103: Majority 53.—(Div. List, No. 415.) [12.30 A.M.]

Original Question again proposed.

MR. LABOUCHERE: I rise to put a question to the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and also to call attention to the manner in which the accounts under this Vote are presented to the Committee. I would ask the right hon. Baronet whether he considers it a good system that our Ambassadors or Ministers should be obliged to retire at 70 years of age. Some years ago, I called attention to this point. We have, in this House, instances of very eminent men of 70 and upwards, who take an effective part in political matters, and we have on the Bench eminent Judges of the same age. The rule to which I am calling attention was only established about 20 years ago, and the object of it was to create a flow of promotion. It was not held that a Minister was unfit to serve the public at the age of 70; but it was thought desirable to retire him then in order to give promotion in the Service. But I have always thought that if a man is ready to serve his country, and can serve his country, he should not be retired so long as he is ready to do it, and can do it, for we know that the present system means an enlargement of the heavy pension list, of which we have to bear the charge. The right hon. Gentleman will bear me out when I say that there are, or have been, many eminent Gentlemen in Her Majesty's Diplomatic Service who may not now be, or may not have been, desirous to retire, and whose valuable services would have been, or would now be, lost to the country, if they had retired, or were now to retire, at the age of 70. It must be recollected that a person who has lived some time at a Court, and is a *persona grata* there, is, in respect of that circumstance, a better man for that particular post than anyone who can be sent to replace him. His retirement, therefore, operates injuriously, both to the taxpayer and to the Diplomatic Service, and I hope, therefore, we shall receive some assurance, not that the rule will be relaxed in this instance or in that, but that the rule will be abrogated altogether. There are one or two other points to which I wish to call attention. In the first place, I desire to call the attention of the Under Secretary, or, perhaps, I should rather say, the Secretary to the Treasury, to the extraordinary way in which these accounts are presented to the Committee. We have, as we all know, already had Votes for Queen's Messengers and couriers; but here is another Vote of £2,400 for Queen's Messengers—that is, couriers. As I understand it, this Vote is for the journeys of the Queen's Messengers back to this country. When a Queen's Messenger goes out, his expenses are placed on the Foreign Office Vote. But when he comes back, his expenses are placed on the Diplomatic Vote. Therefore, we never know what these gentlemen cost the country. There was a strong expression of opinion when the Foreign Office Vote was under consideration that the cost of the Queen's Messengers was excessive; but hon. Gentlemen did not then know that we should have another charge for their expenses in the Votes for the Diplomatic Service. Then there are charges for fuel and lights, for extra rent, and furniture, although we had other Votes for furniture, fuel, &c., some time ago. Why should not the Votes we are now asked to grant in respect of these items appear in the proper place? I do not say that there is not a reason for this charge for extra fuel and lights. All I say is, that all these charges should be massed together, so that we should know what the total amount is. Then, for telegrams there is a further charge of £12,000. There was the other day a lengthy discussion in Committee on the almost annual increase in the cost of telegrams; but it is shown by these Votes that we had not the whole Votes before us then. I suppose that the telegrams sent out by the Foreign Office are charged to the Foreign Office, and the telegrams received by the Foreign Office are charged to the Diplomatic Vote. But surely the charges in respect of both sets of telegrams should be put together. The Chancellor of the Exchequer will see how desirable this would be. To go no further, it would save one discussion. But we should know what is the total sum charged for telegrams. To say that one sum is charged for telegrams sent out, and another for telegrams received, is making a distinction without a difference. I would, therefore, ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he will take steps to have these accounts submitted to the Committee in a better fashion; and, also, whether he can hold out any hope that the absurd rule as to retirement at 70 years of age will be abrogated as soon as possible?

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: As regards the retirement of Ambassadors and Ministers, I apprehend everyone intrusted with the responsible position of Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs must be guided in each case by a regard to the public interests. There are men who can remain and do good service to their country after passing 70 years of age. There are, however, others who require to retire, from impaired health, or the effect of climate, when they arrive at that age. I believe every Foreign Minister would desire to retain the services of men who are valuable to their country as long as possible. There is nothing now to prevent an Ambassador who has passed 70 years of age from remaining at his post for a longer period; but I do not think it possible for anyone in my place to make any other statement on this point than that each case must be decided according to circumstances, and to the interests of the Public Service. As to the arrangement of the Estimates, I am sure that every Foreign Secretary has for many years recognized it as desirable that the Committee should understand the accounts. I do not believe that there is the slightest desire to withhold from the Committee information on the subject. I shall be ready to confer with the Secretary to the Treasury, and see whether this Vote cannot be arranged differently in another year. It is now in the form in which it has every year come before the Committee. If there is any particular item on which any Gentleman requires information I shall be glad to give it to the best of my ability.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I should like to ask the Government, before proceeding to a Vote, if they have considered the propriety of introducing public competition as a condition of entrance into the Diplomatic Service. This question has agitated the minds of other Ministries; but the present Ministers are so superior to all others that it would be well to know if they have turned their attention to it. I cannot imagine any argument in favour of open competition in other branches of the Public Service which would not hold equally good in respect to the Diplomatic Service. Open competition might even be of greater importance and value in regard to the Diplomatic Service than to any other. In the first place, the Diplomatic Service requires, from those who go into it, some knowledge of foreign languages; and, owing to the unfortunate system of education in our public schools, there is only a small proportion of young men who have any conversational knowledge of foreign languages. The adoption of public competition as a means of entrance into the Diplomatic Service would ensure an improvement in our system of education as regards the knowledge of foreign languages. But there is another reason why I would urge the desirability of adopting public examination as a means of entrance into the Diplomatic Service. It is this—that a great deal of the favouritism and patronage that prevails now would be done away with, and that this would tend to purify the tone and spirit of our system of diplomacy. I do not wish to make any aspersions on the present members of the Diplomatic Service; but I must say that I share the feeling of the reformers of the present day, that that which the Psalmist said of all men is peculiarly applicable to them—that they do not tell the truth. The whole system of diplomacy is, in fact, a skilful arrangement for trying to take advantage of our neighbours. I am in favour of seeing all diplomacy carried on in the light of day and in an above-board fashion. I think that this would be best done, or would be more likely to be done, if you commence at the beginning by admitting those who have to take part in the diplomacy of the country into the Diplomatic Service by open competition. I look for my own part with great distrust upon all the arrangements of our Diplomatic Service. I think that half the difficulties by which we are constantly surrounded and half the wars into which we are constantly plunged would be avoided if nine out of ten diplomatists were done away with. There are all sorts of persons—*Chargé d'Affaires*, secretaries, attachés, and officials of all kinds—connected with the Diplomatic Service who are, I believe, in most cases quite unnecessary. We have a Consular Service, and from what information I have been able to gain I believe that the Consuls do most of the work, and are of most assistance to Her Majesty's subjects when they fall into difficulties or into misfortune abroad. Of course, we want a certain number of representatives abroad; but I believe that like other Departments of the Public Service the Diplomatic Service is greatly over-paid and over-manned. But be that as it may, I desire to express my protest against the whole system as it is now carried on, under the firm conviction that as diplomacy now prevails, it leads to international difficulties; and that it would be far better that instead of having all our international affairs carried on in the dark as at present, and only having any information vouchsafed to the Representatives of the people six or 12 months after date, when it is impossible to combat the evil of diplomacy—it would, I say, be much better to have direct communication between one Government and another, or between the Representatives of the people in one country and those in another, so that we may know at the time how matters stand. If there is nothing to be ashamed of, then I say that secrecy is out of place. If you are only trying to outwit your neighbours and get some small advantage over them, I think the less a nation like this has to do with such diplomacy the better. Under all these circumstances, I think it would be well that our whole system of diplomacy should be altered, and, at all events, if we have diplomatists, that they should be admitted into the Service by open competition.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: I also think it would be better to alter the whole system of our diplomatic arrangements. The Americans get their work done twice as well as we do for one-third of the money we spend. I do not think it is necessary to send Ambassadors or Ministers with large salaries and with large staffs to all the places where they are now sent. I think you might often send a *Chargé d'Affaires* or a Consul General who would receive £1,000 or £2,000 a-year, and who would not be expected to entertain or spend money as your present Ambassadors do. You must not suppose that the Minister gets the money that is paid to him. He has to spend it on entertainments. The only Embassy in which a man can save money is Constantinople. One of the greatest evils of the present system is that it renders it impossible to have open competition for entrance into the Diplomatic Service. The third secretary to an Embassy receives £150 a-year, and he is sent to a capital of Europe, where it is impossible for him to live amongst those with whom he associates, and is expected to associate, without spending £600 or £700 a-year. It would be sheer cruelty to send a gentleman who had passed a public examination to a post in an European capital, and call upon him to live amongst those with whom he would have to associate on £150 a-year. Therefore, one evil of the present system is, that it is impossible under it to have an open competitive examination for entrance into the Diplomatic Service. My hon. Friend who has just sat down (Mr. Conybeare) says that our diplomatic servants do not tell the truth, and he urges that as a reason for having a competitive examination. Well, is the competitive examination to be in lying? Is the greatest liar to be sent out as a diplomatist? There may be secrecy in diplomacy, but the individual men tell the truth. It is generally the Ministers in this country who do not tell the truth. The truthful despatch comes home; but that despatch is concealed, and I think it is unfair to throw the responsibility for lying on the diplomatists when the want of truth—and I speak from experience—generally lies with the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON: The question of open competition as a means of admission to the Diplomatic Service has often been the subject of discussion in this House. When it was last discussed it was stated that limited competition had been admitted as regarded the Foreign Office, and Lord Beaconsfield said that it might be extended to the Diplomatic Service. Now, at present, every vacancy that occurs, either in the Foreign Office or in the Diplomatic Service, is open to competition between gentlemen nominated by the Secretary of State. It has been always contended by those who are responsible for the conduct of foreign affairs, that it is desirable that the Secretary of State should exercise some power of selection. The interests committed to the Diplomatic Service are very great, and it is in the highest degree desirable that those who are entrusted with the responsibilities of that Service should be in the highest degree trustworthy. It is necessary that candidates for admission to the Diplomatic Service should come up to a high standard, as the members of that Service occupy a very high position, and the standard required for entrance into the Foreign Office, or into the Diplomatic Service, is very high. At the last competition which took place for admission to the Foreign Office, the second competitor was a man who had taken the highest honours, and several of the highest prizes at his University. Let it be remembered that it is a thing unknown that any secret has ever escaped from the Foreign Office, and it cannot be denied by anyone that there are always secrets in the Foreign Office, the divulging of which might be very injurious to the interests of this country. The hon. Member for the Camborne Division of Cornwall said that the Foreign Service of this country had nothing to do; but it has every day to send out messages or despatches to every part of the world. The commercial affairs alone which are taken care of at the Foreign Office are very important. There are hardly any days when scores of letters are not sent to the Foreign Office by commercial firms or by those engaged in commercial affairs which are of importance. The agents of this country abroad have to exert themselves in procurieg information and in conducting business of the highest importance to commercial firms in this country, and gentlemen display zeal and energy in these affairs. Our efforts are not always successful; but, at least, I can testify to the great zeal displayed by those who represent this country abroad. It is, indeed, said that a lower class of agents would serve the country as well as those who are now employed. But I do not think so. It must be recollected that we have to compete with men of the highest class—I do not mean of the highest birth—in the Public Service of their respective nations. Our interests are not, as we know, inferior to theirs. And if we were not capable of holding our own in diplomacy, the interests of this country would suffer. It is, I think, unworthy of the hon. Member opposite (Mr. Conybeare) to say that diplomacy means insincerity. It does not mean anything of the kind. It means nothing more than bargaining. A mercantile firm cannot, and would not, be said to be insincere, because it looked after its own interests. And our national interests must be maintained as earnestly as those of any mercantile firm.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): The right hon. Baronet let the cat out of the bag when he said that we should not be able to hold our own in diplomacy, unless the men employed in our Diplomatic Service were taken from a certain class. ["No, no!"] Yes; he said so in the first instance, though he afterwards modified his remark. And practically what he said was true. That was, that the major portion of these diplomatic agents are scions of aristocratic houses, genteel paupers, who are supplied with salaries in connection with these diplomatic posts. I should be glad if the right hon. Gentleman who talked of the high standard that young men admitted to the Diplomatic Service have to pass, would give us some individual instances. He was naturally proud and overjoyed to give one instance of one young man out of a great number having obtained University honours. But what about the rest? One man does not make a standard, and the hon. Gentleman knows as well as I do that the major part of these young men stationed at Berlin, Dresden—[*A laugh, and* "No one is stationed there!"]—an hon. Member says that no one is stationed at Dresden. But if he will look at this Vote he will see that there is a Secretary of Legation and *Charge d'Affaires* at the Court of Saxony, with a salary of £750. I have the distinguished honour of knowing several of these diplomatists, and I can assure you that some of these men go to Germany without any knowledge of German—that they go there, in point of fact, to learn the language, in order to qualify themselves for posts elsewhere. [*Renewed laughter.*] I am delighted that hon. Gentlemen opposite are pleased. But let me say that it is absolutely necessary that you should not laugh until you are certain what you are laughing at. At the present time, it is absolutely necessary that the members of the Diplomatic Service should understand German. Germany is much the greatest country in the world at the present time, and accordingly it is absolutely essential to the Diplomatic Service that the German language should be studied. And yet I have known two men—one at Vienna, and the other attached to the establishment at Dresden — neither of whom knew German when they went out. *Ex uno disce omnes;* and you will see that it is the same all round in connection with these establishments that you have in connection with the various Courts of Europe. I am not here to throw obloquy on the holders of important posts; but what I should like to know is this. Is it not true, as I maintain, that in this country the major portion of young educated men are not drawn from the aristocratic classes, but from the upper and lower middle classes? In consequence of their obtaining a good commercial education, and understanding languages, they would be greatly better men for these diplomatic posts than those unfortunate young creatures who are sent over there to try and qualify themselves in some way, so as to save themselves from being a burthen, an incubus, and an infliction on their families. They are thrown on the nation to save their aristocratic parents. Everyone who knows these Embassies will bear me out in saying that the men there are unsuitable, while you have the power to supply them with proper and suitable men—men whom the nation would be proud of—instead of jobbing away these posts to men who are thoroughly and absolutely unsuitable. The hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) took the hon. Member for the Camborne Division of Cornwall (Mr. Conybeare) to task for speaking of diplomatists as people who are in the habit of saying what is not true. But is not the Member for Northampton aware that when an examination was made some years ago, it was found impossible to distinguish between the skull of a first-class thief and the skull of a first-class diplomatist? I merely make that remark, as some attention has been devoted to this question of suitable diplomatists. This much I would certainly say, that if you want to have your foreign affairs managed in a better way than they are at present, it will not be done merely by sticking to precedents. I quite endorse what the right hon. Baronet (Sir James Fergusson) said just now, that there are no secrets to divulge. Most of these men are gentlemen, and as gentlemen they do not divulge secrets. But we want something more than fine gentlemen in our Diplomatic Service. We want men who will be able to carry on the Diplomatic Service in the way the Russian Diplomatic Service is carried on. It is much better than that of this country, and is supposed to be of the first order in the world. The reason is, that they take a great deal more care over their diplomatic appointments than we do, and not merely in regard to the larger Courts, but in the smaller ones. It is at these smaller stations that your great questions arise. What do we see even now in Bulgaria, that very small State? You have there a burning question, which may at any moment precipitate a war, not only between one or two, but between three or four great nations. These questions ought to have a great deal more attention than has hitherto been devoted to them. I must apologize for inflicting any rude or ill-digested remarks upon the Committee at this hour in the morning, and I sincerely hope that, sooner or later, the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury will come nobly forward and put the clôture upon this bad and evil system which has hitherto been productive of disgrace to this country.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): On this subject, the Committee might be interested to know what were my own experiences when I had the honour of serving Her Majesty at Constantinople. Then we had six gentlemen connected with the Embassy; one of them knew seven languages, four of them knew four languages perfectly, and the other three. There was not a single one of these young men who was not a match for any foreign diplomatist at Constantinople, and most of them were superior.

DR. TANNER: But will the Chancellor of the Exchequer tell us how long these gentlemen had been in the Diplomatic Service, and whether any had served elsewhere before they went to Constantinople? We all know that Constantinople is one of the greatest diplomatic centres. I should like an answer to that question.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): The only reason why I have not risen to confirm what was said by the right hon. Baronet (Sir James Fergusson) was that I thought the Committee was anxious to dispose of this Vote; and after the exhaustive discussion which has taken place I trust that the Vote will now be passed. I should, however, like to confirm, from the short experience I had at the Foreign Office, what has been said of the ability and the competency of our young diplomatists. They are quite as good as we could get by open examination. We have a great many exceedingly clever and well educated men. The only fault I have to find with the system at present is that they are not put soon enough to work that calls out their capacities. They are competent for something far better than the mere copying and deciphering of despatches, which is what most of the younger men have alone to do. They are men of large knowledge of languages, and often of considerable natural gifts. I think that, taking it all in all, our Diplomatic Service is one in which we may, as a nation, feel satisfaction.

Original Question put, and *agreed to.*

(10.) Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum, not exceeding £84,125, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1888, for the Expense of the Consular Establishments Abroad, and for other Expenditure chargeable on the Consular Vote."

MR. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.): I beg to move, Sir, that you do now report Progress. I understand that it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government that a Bill, the Technical Instruction (Scotland) Bill, which is put down for to-night, should be proceeded with. As the First Lord of the Treasury is very well aware, the Scotch Votes are put down for 12 o'clock to-morrow, and it is not desirable, therefore, that the proceedings of the Committee of Supply should be further prolonged. I would ask the Government if they intend to take that Bill to-night?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): It is not intended to proceed with the Technical Instruction (Scotland) Bill to-night, and I therefore hope the hon. Gentleman will withdraw his Motion to report Progress.

MR. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee): Will the right hon. Gentleman say what the order for Scotch Business will be to-morrow?

MR. W. H. SMITH: I am afraid I should not be in Order in saying anything about it on the present occasion.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): I should like to support what was said——

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! There is no Motion before the Committee.

DR. TANNER: It has not been withdrawn.

THE CHAIRMAN: It has not been put from the Chair.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): Then I will move it, Sir, and for very much the same reason. How many hours sleep does the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury intend us to have? We have to be here to-morrow at 12 o'clock to assist the Government in discussing these Estimates, and I should like to know how many hours in bed he expects us to have? We have been here since 4 o'clock, and it is now after 1. It used to be very unusual to vote away the money of the country after half-past 12. [An hon. MEMBER: Oh!] Yes; that used to be the old rule of the House of Commons, and I should like to know the intention of the Government?

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Colonel Nolan.*)

MR. W. H. SMITH: The hon. and gallant Gentleman (Colonel Nolan) is an old Member of this House, and he knows very well that towards the end of a Session it is customary to sit till 2 or half-past 2 o'clock in Committee of Supply—[Colonel NOLAN: It is an innovation.] I have been in the House as long as the hon. and gallant Gentleman has, and I have sat on the Opposition Benches for a very long time, and I have thought it my duty to assist Parliament in the discharge of its duty. Now, Sir, I must appeal to the Committee to proceed. It is only 10 minutes past 1, and it is not unreasonable, after the small amount of work that has been done this evening, to ask the Committee to proceed a little longer with the Business.

COLONEL NOLAN: But how many hours sleep does the First Lord of the Treasury think we ought to have?

MR. W. H. SMITH: I will venture to say this, that the hon. and gallant Gentleman (Colonel Nolan) has many more hours sleep than any Member of Her Majesty's Government. This is not the proper way of treating a grave question, and I trust that, having a sense of our position, we shall endeavour to conduct ourselves as Members of Parliament, and not occupy time in this contentious and unseemly manner. I would appeal to the hon. and gallant Member (Colonel Nolan) not to proceed with this Motion, but to allow the Committee at once to go on with its work.

MR. CONYBEARE: I would also appeal to my hon. and gallant Friend (Colonel Nolan) not to press this Motion. I think that in the generosity of our hearts we might fairly assist the Government in getting two or three more Votes before we conclude our Business this evening. I am very sorry to hear that the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury does not get so much sleep as he desires. I thought last night that, after having relieved his mind by his protest, and allowed the House to adjourn at half-past 2 o'clock, he would have had enough sleep.

DR. TANNER: I think the time has come when some limit ought to be placed upon the hours at which these Estimates should be discussed. I would call the attention of the First Lord of the Treasury to the fact that there are several things unblocked on the Notice Paper. The Charity Commissioners Officers Bill stands for third reading. Also lower down, the 29th Order, is the Licensed Premises (Earlier Closing) (Scotland) Bill. That is a subject which will not pass without debate. And if the right hon. Gentleman is really in earnest, if he really means serious business, why should he not now report Progress, and let the Fourth Order be debated. Of course, it is a late period of the Session; but, for my own part, although I suffer very considerable inconvenience by being away from home and attending Parliament here, I should only be too glad to give the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury every assistance in my power by stopping here a few days longer. I do not mind missing the grouse shooting and passing a few extra days here; and I think what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. The right hon. Gentleman can let the *Pandora* wait a little while longer, and then I maintain we can finish the Business of the House in a satisfactory way—not in a hurried way, not in a way which is detrimental to the interests of the nation, and detrimental to the health of the Members of this House, but in a way satisfactory to the right hon. Gentleman, to the Government, and to this House.

COLONEL NOLAN: I am going to withdraw my Motion, and I am not going to enter into an argument with the First Lord of the Treasury as to the comparative amount of rest enjoyed by independent Members of this House and Members of the Government. I maintain, however, that it is not reasonable to keep us here for nine or 10 hours, and then only to give six or seven hours repose before coming here again at 12 o'clock to-morrow. I hope that at the end of another half-hour or so the Government will consent to report Progress.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Original Question again proposed.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): If there are arguments against examinations for the Diplomatic Service, there are none against it in the case of the Consular Service. Indeed, it ought not to be called a Service at all. Its members are, as everybody knows, pitchforked into it without having had any education for it. I am perfectly aware that there is a slight examination at the present time; but it really amounts to nothing at all. I agree with what was said by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that our Diplomatic Service will compare favourably with that of any other country; but I do not think the Chancellor of the Exchequer, or anybody else, will say that our Consular Service does compare favourably with the Consular Service of other countries. I think the French system is infinitely superior to our own. In France they have a regular Consular Service, a man rising regularly from the bottom to the top of the ladder up to Consuls of the first class. We have none of that here. We have a gentleman, who is taken probably because he is the friend of a Minister, or some other reason of that sort, and he is put into the Consular Service, after passing a slight examination. The pay, too, is perfectly arbitrary. I take the page of the Estimates I have open before me. The Consul at Rio Janeiro gets £1,000 a-year, and allowances £800 a-year; and the Consul at Copenhagen £500, and allowances £200. It is a mere matter of haphazard how these Consuls are paid. I agree with the Government that unless you make a radical change in the whole system you could not have any sort of competitive examination in the Diplomatic Service. But you might have it in the Consular Service. You might have a general competition for clerkships in Consulates, and, when there, the men would learn their business. I have always thought that we have made a great mistake in our Consular Service. I think, as a rule, we pay higher than any other country, and we do not under our system get as good Consuls as the other Powers do; whilst, at the same time, from the mere fact that the Consuls are appointed by patronage, you do not get young men into the Service, who will learn their business, but men at almost any age. I do not think there is such a thing as a ready-made Consul, and I hope the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs will say that the Foreign Office will look into this matter, and see whether some alteration cannot be proposed.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): Of course, the hon. Member (Mr. Labouchere) can hardly expect that I should, on the spur of the moment, make a promise which would involve a considerable change in a very important branch of the Service. But I may say this—that there has been of late years a distinct change made in a certain class of Consular appointments. I allude to the Consuls in the East. There is now a competitive examination with the view of filling up all appointments in the East, the Levant, Asia Minor, and so forth from a class of student interpreters. I need not say that I attach weight to what the hon. Member (Mr. Labouchere) has said; but I cannot make any pledge myself.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): Whilst I agree in thinking, with my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere), that some amount of reorganization might be desirable in our Consular Service, I should like to bear testimony to the very great ability, industry, and zeal of a great many of our Consuls. There are a large number of men who, though they have not been appointed in any competitive way, have nevertheless shown the greatest aptitude for the work, and the greatest intelligence in helping on our commercial interests. They produce reports which I believe to be better than those of the Consuls of any other country, and in most cases they have more to do than the Consuls of any other country, owing to the much larger commercial interests of England as compared with other nations. More attention has been given of late to drawing up Reports which shall be of interest and value to the trading community; and although we may desire to see changes made in this and that part of the system, I think we ought all recognize the great services the Consuls are now rendering to British commerce.

SIR RICHARD TEMPLE (Worcestershire, Evesham): I will not detain the Committee long, as the hour is late. But I feel bound to say one word on behalf of men who are serving their country abroad, and who are not here to answer for themselves. In the course of my foreign experience I have known a great many of these Consuls—in Palestine, in Syria, in Asia Minor, in Greece, in Turkey, in Russia (both Odessa and St. Petersburg), in Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, in New York, and in California. In every one of these places I have found the Consuls in every way worthy of the British Service. Whether they are appointed by competitive examination or not, whether they are as well organized in a regular service as they might be, or not, I know that they work well for the good of their country; and, further, I submit that anybody who cares to study the various Consular Reports which are annually submitted by our Consuls abroad, will find them monuments of knowledge, industry, and perspicacity.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): Yes, Sir. Granting that they are competent men—admitting all that for the sake of argument; still, if you had these appointments filled by competitive examination they would be open to everybody. If you make it a case of patronage, and suppose you get good men, still you limit it to the few. Some of the posts are extremely well paid, and would attract a large number of candidates. I do not admit, either, that men appointed by favouritism are likely to be so competent as those appointed after competitive examination.

Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): I should like some explanation as to allowances under this Vote. Now, there are a good many places abroad where you have a lot of English people residing—places like Mentone and Cannes, for instance. You have got a Vice Consul at both of those places, and they only get a very small sum for allowances. But, on the other hand, at a place like Rouen, where there is not at all the same number of English people resident, there is a very large salary given to the Consul. Now, Rouen is not a seaport town. It is a long way up the Seine; and I should like some explanation of the discrepancy in payment at the various places. I would also call attention to this Vote for Reunion—£1,000 a-year is paid for that. It is an out-of-the-way place, and not a commercial centre at all. How is it? Is it in order to combat French interests in that part of the world? If that is done, can we wonder that the French people are rather angry at our diplomatic interferences? I should like some explanation on these points from the right hon. Baronet (Sir James Fergusson).

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON: As a rule, Consuls are appointed where we have a large mercantile interest at stake. Rouen is a most important port, and a very large amount of work devolves upon our Consul there, which is increased owing to the troublesome restrictions at French ports. There is no port where there is more need of an intelligent Consul than at Rouen. In many places where British trade is of much less importance there are unpaid officials—Vice Consuls who receive no pay, but a certain amount of fees. Formerly, the Consular officers were allowed to take fees, but that gave rise to irregularities; and, besides, it is contrary to the practice of this country that officers should be paid by fees. Accordingly, during the last year or two, these fees have been commuted for a fixed allowance. Hon. Members, if they look at the Vote, will see that a very considerable gain has accrued to the Exchequer by the fees being brought into the account, instead of the officers receiving them.

Dr. TANNER: Is that all the remuneration these Consuls receive?

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON: They now pay these fees into the Exchequer, and they receive allowances in lieu of them.

Dr. TANNER: The right hon. Baronet has not answered my question about Reunion.

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON: That is one of the most important Consulates possible. A very large trade is done at Reunion, and all the foreign countries are represented there. British merchants have such a large amount of the trade of the place in their hands that it is highly necessary that we should have a thoroughly competent officer there. Moreover, I would remind the Committee of the immediate neighbourhood of the British Colony of the Mauritius. I trust these explanations will be satisfactory, and that the Committee will now allow the Vote to pass.

Original Question put, and *agreed to.*

(11.) £8,400, to complete the sum for Slave Trade Services.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I desire to ask the Minister in charge of this Vote to state whether there is any, and what, guarantee that these liberated Africans do not, after awhile, fall again into the hands of the slave traders. With an amount of £5 a-head the liberated slaves are handed over to certain missionary societies, the Church Society, and the University Missions, by the Consul at Zanzibar. A great number of slaves come into the hands of the British authorities on that part of the African Coast, and some of them appear to be kept for a time by these missionary societies; but is it within the knowledge of British officials what becomes of these Africans when they pass from the hands of these missionaries? Is it true that while many of them are kept nominally at the expense of the Exchequer in a condition very little distinguishable from slavery itself, that others fall again into the hands of slave dealers, and the same thing is repeated?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir James Fergusson) (Manchester, N.E.):

I can speak from personal knowledge of the East Coast of Africa. When I was Governor of Bombay, I made it my business to inquire what became of the slaves captured from the dhows, and I satisfied myself that the British officials took pains to see that they were placed in voluntary service with those who were willing to employ them. Care was taken that they were not detained against their will; and I do know, for I noted several instances, that these people make useful servants, and that they are quite as much their own masters as any who have never been taken from their homes. I am not able to say how it is with regard to the West Coast; I am not able to say that some may not have fallen again into the hands of the slave-traders when released; but I should be surprised if the results on the West Coast are different from those on the East.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: Is it not a very small portion that find their way to Aden?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): The charge of £5 referred to is a payment to the Societies who take charge of these people. There are three Societies—the Church Mission, the University Mission, and the French Catholic Mission, and I believe there is a competition between these Societies—[Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: No doubt.] This is, I believe, by far the most economical, humane, and useful method of securing that these liberated slaves are taken care of. The £5 is only paid to the Society when the slave is handed over to its care.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: Can the hon. Gentleman tell us the number of slaves liberated, the number handed over to the Societies during the last three years, and the number they have on hand? It is perfectly true there is a competition for these £5 notes, of which the Society gets one with each slave; but the point is what is done with the slave, what becomes of him after the society has obtained £5 on his account?

MR. JACKSON: I am not prepared to say what becomes of the balance of them. I think the Government has discharged its duty when it hands over the liberated slaves to responsible societies like these.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: Responsible to whom?

MR. JACKSON: I mean responsible in the sense that they are Societies whose business it is to look after these poor creatures, and I think we may rely on their work being properly done. I have a record of the number handed over to each society since 1884.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: Those who are handed over to the towns, does the Government watch what becomes of them?

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: I know that the managers of certain asylums find employment for them. This is done to a considerable extent by the Roman Catholic brethren at Aden. There is a large demand for labour at Aden.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: Yes; I admit the Aden part.

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: Well, if at times there is any superfluity of labour at Aden, then it naturally flows on to Bombay, where there is any amount of employment at well-paid rates. I have no doubt the steamers from Aden to Bombay carry a great number of these Africans.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: If the Government would institute some system by which the liberated Africans could be transported to Bombay and employment found there for them I see no objection; but I do see an objection to a system that allows the payment of £5 a-head and then you lose sight of them, and it is doubtful what becomes of them.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): Perhaps the Secretary to the Treasury can explain why there is an increase of 50 per cent in the tonnage and bounties under Sub-head A?

MR. JACKSON: For years the number of slaves captured fell off very much. This tonnage is paid under an Act of Parliament according to the captures. The year before last the Vote was reduced to £2,000; but it was found not sufficient and had to be raised to £4,000, and last year, I believe I am correct in saying, I had to bring in a Supplementary Estimate for £2,000 to make up the amount. We have, therefore, this year raised the amount to £6,000.

COLONEL NOLAN: I would for a moment ask attention to the amount—£7,950—paid as a subsidy for the steam service between Aden and Zanzibar. How many liberated Africans are carried by this Service? I should like to have some details as to the item, which I do not object to; but I think it requires watching. This Vote is, I think, obtained under a mistake rather. There used to be a great outcry about the suppression of the Slave Trade, and it was all very well to undertake the duty on the West Coast; but the time is now come, I think, when this suppression should be carried out by joint international arrangement. It would cost us less; and I do not know that it is peculiarly our business to interfere with an Arabian institution by suppressing the Slave Trade on the African Coast. I do not, however, wish to raise a long debate. I only say that this item of £7,950 for steamers requires watching.

Mr. JACKSON: This subsidy is paid partly for postal services, partly to encourage a trade route, and partly to assist in the suppression of the Slave Trade. The contract was originally for £10,000, and expired in 1882. It was a question whether it was necessary to renew it; but it was renewed for six months, and subsequently the House reduced the amount to that at which it now stands. As I have said, it answers the purpose of securing a regular trade communication; it provides a mail service; and it is an additional service to assist in the suppression of the Slave Trade.

Colonel NOLAN: This is a very interesting piece of information we have been supplied with. This is not merely a service of steamers to assist in the suppression of the Slave Trade; but, incidentally, it is a subsidy voted for carrying mails, but not included in the Post Office Vote, and we also learn that it is a subsidy to stimulate and assist the trade between these places, Zanzibar and Aden. Now, this last, as a matter of general policy, I do not disapprove of; but why it should be an exceptional policy in reference to Zanzibar and Aden I do not perceive. I have always been met with arguments in opposition to such a policy when I suggested a subsidy for a line of steamers between Galway and New York; but it seems the trade between Zanzibar and Aden has more claim on the consideration of the Government than that between Galway and New York.

Dr. TANNER: One item here deserves a certain amount of attention, the allowances under Sub-head I of £5 a-head to Missionary Societies.

Mr. JACKSON: That is what we have been discussing.

Dr. TANNER: It has been referred to, but not in the manner I look at it. This is an allowance of £5 a-head upon every slave handed over to the Church Mission and the Universities Mission by our Consul at Zanzibar. Well, it is not so very long ago that this country objected to the Christianizing of heathen nations being carried on at the expense of the State. I am not going to say a word against the Church Missionary Society; but I certainly think it is scarcely right that money should be collected and paid over by the State to one particular denomination. ["Oh, oh!"] I am only stating what is fair, square, and above-board, and I really cannot see my way to let this item pass in an ordinary way without, at any rate, putting in my protest against it. I know something of the results of the work of these Societies from the remarks of men practically acquainted with the people, notably one gentleman whose name I will not mention, a member of my own family. He told me—we do not speak together now, Sir, since I have been Boycotted—[*Laughter*]—but in years past, when he happened to be in Her Majesty's Service, he told me that if he wanted a servant when he happened to be in Africa, give him a good honest heathen, and that practically when they become converted, when they are handed over to the Church Missionary Society, they become the greatest thieves possible. [*Cries of* "Divide!"] I merely make that remark in quite a casual way; but, possibly, many hon. Members—perhaps the right hon. Baronet opposite (Sir James Fergusson) could from practical experience support what I say, that the process of Christianizing—this putting in the heathen at one end of the machine and turning him out a Christian—is not always satisfactory. [*Cries of* "Divide!" *and* "Order!"] That is what the money is being paid for. ["No, no!"] My remarks are from what I have imbibed from people who have had practical experience. [*Cries of* "Divide!"] If hon. Members will interrupt me, all that remains for me to do is to move the reduction of the Vote by the amount of these bounties.

Vote *agreed to.*

(12.) Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum, not exceeding £1,505, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1888, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Three Representatives of Her Majesty's Government on the Council of Administration of the Suez Canal Company."

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N): May I ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer to tell us what interest we are now getting for our £4,000,000 shares in the Suez Canal Company? That was the amount, I think, of the investment by Mr. Disraeli's Government, and it was thought to be a good bargain. I do not know whether it is now considered such.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers that question, Sir, I beg to move that you do report Progress. I make that Motion because it appears to be impossible to obtain from the Government any expression of opinion on matters as to which we desire information. Besides this the hour is late, and we have to meet again early to-day. Of course, the Government are interested in getting money for Supply; but this is specifically a Tory Vote from its origin, and I ask the Government are they afraid of defending the position they took up? Will they allow Progress to be reported, and permit this discussion at a time when they cannot sit there refusing to answer questions? [*Cries of* "Order!"] I say it without fear. [*Cries of* "Order!"] I must call on the Committee to assist me in forwarding the Motion I now formally move.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Dr. Tanner.*)

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): Replying, in the first instance, to the question asked by the hon. and gallant Member (Colonel Nolan), I have to say that the interest now paid on the Suez Canal Shares is the same as in the first instance—£200,000 a-year.

DR. TANNER: I rise to a point of Order. I moved to report Progress. Is the right hon. Gentleman in Order in answering a question, and not addressing himself to what is actually before the Committee?

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! The First Lord of the Treasury.

MR. W. H. SMITH: Complaint is made that Ministers have not answered questions; but there is no ground for that complaint. Every question that has been properly addressed to a Minister has been answered fully. It is not consistent with what is due to the Committee to give any answer whatever to trivial statements that certainly are not creditable to those who make them.

MR. EDWARD HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.): I am sorry my hon. and gallant Friend has incurred the rebuke.

MR. W. H. SMITH: I made no allusion to the hon. and gallant Member for North Galway. I answered his question. The hon. Member for West Kerry was not in the House when the speech to which I did refer was made.

DR. TANNER: Of course, I must take the right hon. Gentleman's remarks as applying to myself, and I receive them as they deserve to be received.

MR. EDWARD HARRINGTON: It is very inconvenient that these personal incidents should occur. Let me say that I was in the House, though the right hon. Gentleman did not observe me. I thought, however, that the right hon. Gentleman applied the expression "frivolous," to the question of my hon. and gallant Friend, and I regret I made the mistake. Passing by these personal references, I really think the Motion might now be accepted at this hour. My hon. Friend the Member for the Camborne Division of Cornwall, who moved in favour of ceasing Business at this hour, seems desirous of proceeding. I do not wish to intervene, but to say that, considering all the circumstances, I think the Motion is reasonable. At any rate, we might fairly test the feeling of the Committee by a Division, making, of course, due allowance for the majority of the Government. I take the opportunity of protesting against Business being proceeded with now, when the few Members present show indications of sleep, physical or mental.

DR. CLARK: Let me suggest that we should take no more debatable Votes, but proceed with Votes to which no discussion attaches. Such are, I believe, No. 4 and No. 7. These are not contentious, and, these being finished, we might close Committee for to-night.

MR. W. H. SMITH: Yes; I will agree to that.

DR. TANNER: I only happen to be a very young Member of the House, of which the right hon. Gentleman is the Leader, and upon whom falls the duty of maintaining the dignity of his position. But, Sir, he has gratuitously insulted me to-night. [*Cries of* "Order!"] Yes; and it is in accord with the spirit that a short time ago led him to move my suspension from the House.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! I may warn the hon. Member that there is a power to deal with undue repetition.

DR. TANNER: Quite so, Mr. Courtney.

THE CHAIRMAN: Does the hon. Member withdraw his Motion?

DR. TANNER: No, Sir.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: The Motion, it appears to me, is a perfectly reasonable one. Still, it seems to be more and more accepted that, towards the end of the Session, the Committee must sit to no matter what hour, and vote the public money without reasonable discussion and explanation. It seems to me it is the duty of Members to attend until the work they have to do is properly despatched. If they object to sitting here late in the Session, if they chafe at delay that keeps the Committee sitting through the month of August, then they have no business to be Members of Parliament at all. Men who undertake the duties ought to be capable of discharging them. But I maintain it is not a reasonable manner of discharging Business to sit here from 2 to 3 o'clock voting away large sums of money, while half the Members present do not hide the fact that they are more prepared for sleep than debate.

MR. EDWARD HARRINGTON: My hon. Friend (Dr. Tanner) says he shall persist in this Motion, because it is a personal matter. I do not think it is a personal matter. I certainly intended to support the Motion to report Progress at this hour of the morning, because I think that we have done enough work; but if my hon. Friend persists in making this a personal matter between himself and the First Lord of the Treasury I certainly shall vote against him.

THE CHAIRMAN: Will the hon. Member for Mid Cork (Dr. Tanner) name a second Teller?

DR. TANNER: Yes; Mr. Pyne.

THE CHAIRMAN: Does the hon. Member consent to act as second Teller?

MR. PYNE (Waterford, W.): He does.

Question put, and *negatived.*

Original Question put, and *agreed to.*

(13.) £21,300, to complete the sum for Subsidies to Telegraph Companies.

Resolutions to be reported *To-morrow.*

Committee to sit again *To-morrow.*

SUPPLY.—REPORT.

Resolutions [22nd August] *reported.*

First Resolution—

> "That a sum, not exceeding £88,354, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1888, for Criminal Prosecutions at Assizes and Quarter Sessions, and for Adjudications under 'The Summary Jurisdiction Act, 1879;' for Sheriffs' Expenses, Salaries to Clerks of Assize and other Officers, Compensation to Clerks of the Peace and others; and for Expenses incurred under Extradition Treaties"

—read a first and second time.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): One moment, before this is passed. I wanted to say one or two words in order to place before the Government a matter which I was prevented by a little error from placing before them in Committee yesterday evening. It is in reference to the chaplains at gaols. I only wanted to mention this—that there are a number of gaols—some 18 altogether, I think—with less than an average daily number of 100 prisoners, yet in every one of those gaols there is a chaplain employed and paid at the rate of £100 or £150 a-year. There are 12 chaplains at £100 a-year and six at £150, and I only want to suggest to the Government that great economy might be effected in this item. I do not for one moment mean to say that it is not desirable to have somebody who can conduct religious services in the gaol; but I know as a fact that it is perfectly possible to employ some local clergyman in the different towns where the gaols are situated, on the same principle as that in which chaplains in workhouses are appointed. You can get in almost every town a local clergyman who would be willing to do all the duty required at a salary of £40 or £50 a-year in addition to what he receives from his benefice. It seems to me that if you proceed in this manner and on the same lines as you adopt in the case of chaplains for Workhouses and Unions, you might effect an enormous saving. At present you pay for these 18 chaplains £2,100 a-year; I have made a calculation by which it appears to me that you could save, at least, £900 or £1,000 per annum on that item alone. I therefore thought it my duty to bring this matter before the House in the briefest possible manner.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): This suggestion of the hon. Member shall receive our full consideration.

Resolution *agreed to.*

Remaining Resolutions *agreed to.*

CHARITY COMMISSIONERS (OFFICERS) BILL.—[BILL 362.]

(*Mr. Jackson, Mr William Henry Smith.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER) (Isle of Wight), in moving that the Bill be now read second time, said: This is a Bill to promote economy, and, at the same time, to increase the efficiency of the working of the Charity Commission. The first part of the Bill proposes to appoint Inspectors, who shall also be Assistant Commissioners. Under the existing Act of Parliament Inspectors can only exercise certain functions; and in view of the more economical working and better administration of the Act, it is wise that persons should be appointed who can perform the duties of Assistant Commissioners. There are also some minor alterations. The Bill is not one likely to give rise to any opposition, and I therefore hope the House will read it a second time without delay.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Attorney General.*)

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): The observations of the hon. and learned Gentleman naturally lead the House to suppose that this is an exceedingly simple and harmless measure, and that practically it makes only a nominal change in the existing state of the law. But, besides the fact that it replaces the existing Inspectors by a system of Assistant Commissioners, it also leaves some of the Inspectors with admittedly considerably less work to do, though their pay is to remain precisely the same. [Sir RICHARD WEBSTER: Oh, no.] The hon. and learned Gentleman says he thinks not. Well, he will find in the Bill a provision to the effect that any official now trustee of a charitable fund shall not, after the passing of the Act and while he shall continue to hold the office of official Inspector, receive any less salary than he received as official trustee.

SIR RICHARD WEBSTER: That provision only relates to a person holding the office of official trustee. It has nothing to do with the duties of Inspectors.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I will not discuss the matter at length, although I demur altogether to the statement of the hon. and learned Gentleman. But, besides that, the Bill also provides, in the clause which the hon. and learned Gentleman referred to as only a minor matter, that power shall be taken to render regular that which possibly may have been irregular before the passing of this Act in regard to charity lands. Sir, this Bill is one which requires very careful consideration before the House can agree to read it a second time. At this hour of the night it is not likely to receive the scrutiny which it deserves, and therefore I beg to move that the debate be now adjourned.

MR. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N,W.): I beg to second that.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Mr. Arthur O'Connor.*)

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I trust that the hon. Gentleman will not persevere with his Motion. This Bill has received very careful consideration from Gentlemen on both sides of the House. It proceeds not from us, but from the previous Government; it has been carefully considered by a Departmental Committee; it has also been considered by a Committee of this House; it is purely an administrative measure to promote the efficiency of the Commission, and it will also considerably reduce the charge of the Service. I trust that having regard to the fact that no new powers whatever are conferred by it, that the funds to be dealt with are thereby to be placed under more careful investigation, and that in all respects it is free from Party spirit, the Bill will meet with acceptance by the House.

MR. EDWARD HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.): The right hon. Gentleman tells us that this Bill invests the Charity Commissioners with no new powers. But, even if it is everything which it is represented to be, I think we have come to this—that we may fairly ask that no more practical Business shall be done. This may be a dog-in-the-manger attitude to assume; but I think it is creditable at this hour. The right hon. Gentleman is, I hold, unwise in persisting in proceeding with the Bill at this hour; and all I can say is that if the matter goes to a Division we must vote against the Bill over and over again, before we can agree that a Bill of this kind shall be rushed through the House at this hour.

MR. T. E. ELLIS (Merionethshire): I hope that my hon. Friend (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) will allow this Bill to be read a second time. I have several times asked the Government Questions relating to charities, especially Welsh—and I have pointed out to the House on many occasions that the Welsh charities are in a scandalous condition, and that they are continually lapsing in consequence of there being no proper supervision. The Government have confessed that they are ready to take action in this matter, providing the Charity Commissioners have a sufficiently large staff to enable them to do so. Now, these matters cannot be arranged by local correspondence; local inquiries must be made before reliable information can be obtained from the trustees; and I, therefore, sincerely hope that the hon. Member will allow the House to proceed with the second reading of this Bill.

MR. C. S. PARKER (Perth): I should like to say one word in support of the Bill. The Commissioners have done good work in connection with the endowed schools, and they impressed a Committee of this House very strongly with their efficiency in that department of their work. It was made apparent to us that the amalgamation of the offices of Inspector and Assistant Commissioner would lead to increased efficiency, without increasing the expense. I do hope, therefore, that hon. Members will be persuaded to allow the Bill to pass this stage. It will be open to them to discuss details in Committee.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I am as averse as anyone to going on with Business called contentious at this hour of the night, and if I had my way we would never sit later than 2 o'clock. But I would respectfully ask my hon. Friends behind me not to press this Motion. The matter came before the House only a few nights ago, when I received certain assurances from the Government. To the best of my recollection, I certainly felt satisfied in my own mind that this measure should be allowed to proceed; and therefore, as far as I am concerned, I shall not oppose it.

DR. TANNER (Cork, Co. Mid): I also appeal to my hon. Friends not to press this Motion, as the measure is one on which we are all substantially agreed. Sir, before you came into the Chair, I asked that Progress should be reported while certain items were under consideration in Committee, and I then gave as a reason that this Bill ought to be proceeded with. Accordingly, I think it is only fair on my part to carry out the view I then expressed, and I will press my hon. Friend (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) not to persevere with his Motion, but to allow the Bill to be read a second time.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I feel, Sir, that I am totally unable to resist the appeal of my hon. Friend the Member for Mid Cork, and I, therefore, ask leave to withdraw my Motion.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Original Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Thursday.*

LICENSED PREMISES (EARLIER CLOSING) (SCOTLAND) BILL.—[BILL 384.]

(*The Lord Advocate.*)

CONSIDERATION OF LORDS' AMENDMENTS.

Lords' Amendments *considered.*

Amendment,

In page 2, line 22, to leave out "ten of the clock at night of any day," and insert "such hour at night of any day, not earlier than ten and not later than eleven, as the licensing authority may direct,"

the first Amendment, read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said Amendment."—(*Mr. Mark Stewart.*)

MR. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox): I rise for the purpose of opposing the Motion which has been made, and at this hour of the morning I shall be very short indeed. It is right that I should explain to the House the position in which the Bill now stands. When the Bill left this House, the hour of 10 o'clock was fixed by it as the universal closing hour for spirit shops in Scotland. At present the hour of closing is 11 o'clock. According to the Amendment introduced by the other House, the hour of closing in towns with a population under 50,000 is made 10 o'clock on the opinion of the Local Authority, while in towns with a population exceeding 50,000 it is to be exactly as at present, 11 o'clock. Now, Sir, according to the view taken by this House, it was considered that in Scotland the hour of closing might reasonably be 10 o'clock, especially in the country districts, and that is the point with which I propose to deal at present—with the case of country districts where the population is under 50,000. In Scotland the feeling and the habits of the people are all in favour of the hour of closing being 10 o'clock, and it is a remarkable circumstance that not a single Representative for Scotland will rise in his place at the present moment and state that the feeling in his constituency is in favour of 11 o'clock. As regards places with under 50,000 inhabitants, I believe the universal opinion in Scotland is in favour of this earlier hour of closing, and no representation which I have had during the progress of this Bill, even on behalf of the licensing interest, was in favour of 11 o'clock in the country districts. They were quite satisfied with 10 o'clock. But the Lord Advocate went further than we are now asking the House to go, because he thought that in country districts the closing hour should be 9.30. I hope, therefore, that the House will fall in with the universal feeling in Scotland, and in face of the fact that there is really no opposition on the part of any Scotch Member, and that this is not a Party question at all, will agree to disagree with the Lords' Amendment.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): As I took some part in the discussion when the Bill was previously in the House I may be allowed to say a few words. And, first, I would remark that Her Majesty's Government consider this Bill as that of a private Member upon which each Member is free to act on his own opinion. I had formed a decided opinion that the Bill as it left the House of Lords is an excellent Bill, and I have heard nothing from the hon. Member to induce me to change that opinion. I do not understand him to suggest any Amendment in regard to towns with a population above 50,000, and therefore I may consider that that matter is settled. In support of his opposition to the Lords' Amendment in reference to other places, I was somewhat astonished to hear his line of argument. He has told us that it is his belief that it is the unanimous opinion in Scotland that in boroughs of population under 50,000 the closing hour should be 10 o'clock. Well, if that is so, the Bill as it left the House of Lords gives the power to carry that opinion into effect.

MR. CALDWELL: If the right hon. and learned Gentleman will pardon me, the present Licensing Authorities are not elected by the ratepayers at all, so it is impossible that the ratepayers can have any means to influence the Licensing Authority by their opinion.

MR. J. H. A. MACDONALD: I do not see that that alters what I have stated. The hon. Member says it is the unanimous feeling of Scotland that in boroughs with a population under 50,000 the closing hour should be 10 o'clock. Then that will be attained. ["No!"] If the feeling is unanimous, it must be so. I do not see how an unanimous feeling can find expression in any other result. By the proposal here, it is open to the Licensing Authority to meet the requirements of particular districts, many of which, if the hon. Member is right, will undoubtedly adopt the 10 o'clock hour. My hon. Friend, I believe, is in favour of local option, and this is a step in that direction. It is the nearest we can get at this time. I argued, on a previous occasion, that we ought to wait until the establishment of the new Local Authority. But that will very shortly come about, I hope, and the new authority will exercise power under this Bill. Therefore, I see no reason why we should press for an alteration of the Lords' Amendment. The result will be that which the hon. Member desires, if we agree with the Amendment; while if we refuse to accept it the Bill may be prejudiced, and we may lose the reform which it might effect in our licensing system.

MR. MASON (Lanark, Mid): The right hon. and learned Gentleman has taken advantage of my hon. Friend's statement, which is not absolutely correct in a technical sense, that the feeling is unanimous. It is quite true that in those districts where the people have a voice in the appointment of the Licensing Authority, these give effect to the wish of the locality; but we know that, in many instances, the Justices act quite contrary to the popular will in regard to licences. Though it is not quite correct to say the feeling is unanimous, I am bound to say that it is very largely in favour of adopting 10 o'clock as the hour throughout Scotland. I believe public opinion would sanction the passing of a measure making the hour 10 o'clock throughout all Scotland, large towns included. I hope the House will not agree with the Amendment made in "another place." Let us restore it to its original shape, or I fear the Bill will be of little practical use.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): There is another principle at stake, whether the Representatives of the Scotch people are to be governed by a small Committee of the House of Lords acting as a Publican's Defence Association. That is really what it comes to. I think the House of Lords, having had its way with a measure of first-class importance for Ireland last week, might have left this small Scotch measure to be worked out by the Representatives of the Scotch people. Though I am not a Scotch Member I am a Scotchman, and have interests in Scotland, and I protest against the House of Lords taking this measure to pieces, and defying the almost unanimous wish of Scotch Members.

MR. CONYBEARE: I think the argument of the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate is about as weak as it could be. He tells us the Bill is returned to us an "excellent Bill." Why? Because the desire of the people of Scotland, as represented by their Members here in the Commons, is thwarted and negatived by a certain irresponsible body of hereditary legislators. I never knew a Bill yet come back to us, after having been sent to "another place," that was not spoiled and mutilated by their Lordships over the way. I think the mere fact of any Amendment being made by the Lords in a Bill of this nature, which is the outcome of the wishes of the Scotch people, is quite sufficient justification for our rejecting it. I certainly hope our Friends from Scotland, who are practically interested, will go to a Division, and that we may teach noble Lords a lesson. Another argument of the Lord Advocate was a mere bit of special pleading. He takes exception to the expression that Scotch opinion is unanimous in favour of the 10 o'clock rule, and says if it is unanimous then it must take effect. What is the provision inserted by the Lords? It is to take away the hard-and-fast rule desired by the Scotch people, and to give to certain Boards, not responsible —not directly responsible—to the people whose interests are at stake, a discretion to shift this rule from 10 o'clock to 11 o'clock, or any intermediate time. Now, what the people of Scotland want is that they should be able by legislation of this kind to lay down a rule for their own guidance and interest, and all I can say is that it is our duty to take a stand in a matter like this against what I do not hesitate to call the insolent interference of the Lords.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. Member has used an expression not consistent with the ordinary courtesy of this House towards the other House. That is a word that ought not to be applied to the other House of Parliament.

MR. CONYBEARE: I certainly withdraw the expression, Sir, and I will substitute the word unwarranted.

MR. PROVAND (Glasgow, Blackfriars, &c.): The Amendments proposed in "another place" will practically amount to a nullification of the Bill. By one Amendment the Bill will not apply to any place with more than 50,000 inhabitants; but other places with less than that population may settle for themselves, by means of the Licensing

Authority, whether the hour shall be 10 or 11. But it so happens that in the large places, if the optional rule applied, many would choose 10 o'clock, because it is the wish of the people by whom the Licensing Authority is elected. But in the smaller places, where the authority is not elected, or certainly in a large number of instances, the hour will be left as at present—11—though this would not be the will of the people at all, but the will of a nominated, not an elected, Licensing Authority. The Lord Advocate, when he speaks of the opinion of Scotland, would almost make us think he had never been in that country. If there is one subject on which the Scotch people have made up their minds, it is the subject of temperance. I say, without hesitation, that he cannot produce any evidence from Returns or statistics to show there is any difference of opinion in one part of the country from the other. I believe the whole of Scotland desires that 10 o'clock should be the hour for closing public-houses. Any statement to the contrary is purely imaginary. Facts and literature made public in Scotland in reference to this question leave no doubt on any man's mind who will take the trouble to read. I do not speak as a teetotaller, for I am not one, nor am I connected with any society of that kind. It is usually considered by others that teetotallers are fanatics, and their authority is not always accepted; therefore it is I mention that I am not a teetotaller, nor, so far as I know, likely to become one. This Bill is advocated by the teetotallers, and among the temperance party in Scotland the feeling is very strong indeed in favour of the measure; but if you limit it to the temperance party, you will not include anything like the number of Scotch people who are in favour of it. The feeling is universal throughout Scotland in favour of the Bill. And now, just to touch on another point. If the Bill passes in its present form, which of course it will not, for we will not have it so, you will have places in which on one side of the road public-houses will close at 10, and on the other side at 11. Was not this point discussed and settled on the second reading? Was not an Amendment and Schedule rejected by both sides, because of the irreconcilable inconsistency of this position? I have said the feeling in Scotland is universal, and strongly in favour of the Bill, and I may say the feeling is as strong against accepting it in any form but that in which it left this House. Unless we get it so, we would rather not have it. We might as well be told by the Government that they do not care what the Scotch Members think; they might as well tell us we do not represent the opinion of the people, which has a much better representation in the other House; and I am sure such language would not be farther from accuracy than some statements we have heard against the Bill.

MR. MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright) rose——

MR. SPEAKER said, he would remind the hon. Member that he had no right of reply. He had moved to agree with the Lords' Amendment.

MR. M'LAGAN (Linlithgow): I am surprised that an attempt should be made to support the Amendment by the argument that it is a step in the direction of local option. Local option promises that effect shall be given to popular opinion; but it is well known that in many instances the action of the Licensing Authority is in direct contravention of the wish of the people. If the whole Bill were constructed on the principle of giving a discretionary power to all Licensing Authorities I should have less objection; but it is to the invidious distinctions I strongly object, and I shall oppose the Amendment.

MR. C. S. PARKER (Perth): I agree with all that has been said to the effect that Scotland is practically unanimous in favour of this Bill; and I believe, also, that exception may be taken to the action of some Licensing Authorities in country districts. But, nevertheless, I am anxious that we should not lose the Bill altogether, for it still contains what will be valued in a great part of Scotland—in my own constituency, for instance. If the Bill becomes law, the Perth Licensing Authority will make use of it immediately to fix the hour at 10 o'clock, and we should have 30,000 people drinking for one hour less. I believe, also, that although licensing magistrates in the country have shown themselves often very unready to listen to the voice of the people in the matter of issuing licenses, yet on this question of shorter hours they, in a large number of cases, will go with the people. I beg hon. Members not to run the risk of losing the Bill altogether.

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I trust the Bill may be lost altogether, or passed into law in the form in which it left this House. As we passed it, it would do something useful; it decided that public-houses should close at 10 o'clock instead of 11. If it passes with these alterations, it lays down the principle that a certain number of magistrates sitting as a Licensing Authority, shall be at liberty to do what the other House will not permit this House to do. That is an intolerable state of affairs, against which we ought to make a stand.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): Just one word upon this question. We have heard the expression of the opinion of Scotch Members, and I presume they are the best judges of their own business. Speaking for myself, and with no particular insight into this question, I say it is one that would be best left for settlement to the Scotch Representatives, who are here in considerable numbers, and I call on other Members of the House, who probably know as little of this question as I do, not to vote upon it, but to leave it altogether for Scotch Members to deal with.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): Just a word before the Division is taken. I do not represent a Scotch constituency; but I claim to know Scotland as much as any hon. Member, and I must say I think very unjust aspersions have been thrown on the county magistracy by some of the things that have been said. What is the meaning of these statements that the justices go against the feeling of the people? I know something of the work of Licensing Authorities, and I can say that the great effort of the justices is to keep down the number of public-houses, and they continually refuse licences for that purpose. They are as much interested in the cause of temperance and moderation as any body of men can be. If we are to have Local Authorities of a more representative character some day, surely here is a question that it is only reasonable to leave to the decision of those best acquainted with the local circumstances in each place? If there are steamers coming in with travellers late at night, and it may seem desirable to keep open an hour longer, surely the Local Authority should have the power of doing that, instead of our laying down a hard-and-fast line. It is splitting straws to say the Bill is not worth having, because it gives the Licensing Authority power to make distinctions between 10 o'clock and 11 o'clock, according to circumstances. This measure as it comes to us from the House of Lords fairly meets the wishes of the people of Scotland, and each place will fix the hour as suits it best.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): My experience of the action of county magistrates is the very reverse of that of the right hon. Baronet. In our large towns, when the borough magistrates, who are responsible for the borough, refuse licences time after time, the county magistrates come in in overwhelming numbers, and grant the licences in spite of the strong protests of the bailies and local magistrates. For that reason we object to the clause, as well as the manner in which it has been inserted, and we shall oppose it.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 57; Noes 38: Majority 19.—(Div. List, No. 416.)
[2.50 A.M.]

Second Amendment *agreed to.*

Amendment,

In page 3, line 8, to leave out "ten of the clock at night of any day," and insert "such hour at night of any day not earlier than ten, and not later than eleven as the licensing authority may direct,"

—the next Amendment, read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said Amendment."—(*Mr. Mark Stewart.*)

MR. CALDWELL: I have to ask now that this debate be adjourned. I think in a matter of this kind, which is a very important matter to the people of Scotland, at 3 in the morning, and with the small attendance the Division has disclosed, we should agree to adjourn.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. Caldwell,*)—put, and *agreed to.*

Debate *adjourned* till *Friday.*

IRISH LAND LAW BILL.

Message from *The Lords*,—That they have *agreed to* the Amendments made by this House to the Amendments made by the Lords to the Amendments made by this House to the Irish Land Law Bill, and to the Consequential Amendment made by this House to the said Bill, without any Amendment, and do not insist on their Amendments to which this House has *disagreed.*

House adjourned at Three o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, 24th August, 1887.

MINUTES.]—SUPPLY—*considered in Committee* —CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES; CLASS III.—LAW AND JUSTICE, Votes 17 to 20

Resolutions [August 23] *reported.*

PUBLIC BILLS — *Committee* — *Report* — Lunacy Districts (Scotland) * [318]; Secretary for Scotland Act (1885) Amendment [360-385].

Committee — *Report* — *Third Reading* — Sheriff of Lanarkshire * [349], and *passed.*

QUESTIONS.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—ARRANGEMENT OF SCOTCH BUSINESS.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) said, he should like to ask the First Lord of the Treasury a Question with regard to the course of Scotch Business that day. The right hon. Gentleman gave a very specific pledge that the Scotch Members should be consulted as to the order in which the Scotch Bills should be placed on the Paper; but, so far as he knew, not one of the Scotch Members had been consulted on the matter. Unfortunately, the Lord Advocate was absent at the time, and the promise must have been forgotten, for on looking at the Paper that day——

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. Gentleman is only entitled to ask a Question.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL said, the Question was, whether the right hon. Gentleman had borne in mind that pledge, and had he ascertained the views of the Scotch Members?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster), in reply, said, that to the best of his belief the order in which the Scotch Bills were on the Paper was in accordance with the views of the Scotch Members. ["No, no!"] Well, he was sorry that it was not so.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL said, a specific pledge had been given, but not kept.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY—CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES.

SUPPLY—*considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

CLASS III.—LAW AND JUSTICE.

(1.) £43,465, to complete the sum for Courts of Law and Justice, Scotland.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): I wish to put a question to the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) in reference to the item of £800 included in this Vote for the Auditor of the Court of Session. I understand that the gentleman who holds that office receives fees for doing work which he is not compelled to do, and I want to know how much he receives in the shape of salary for work he is compelled to do under Act of Parliament, and how much in the shape of fees for other work? One of the duties imposed upon the Auditor of the Court of Session is to determine the Election Law of Scotland so far as expenses are concerned. I may remind the Committee that in Scotland we have no Schedule such as exists in regard to England and Ireland, and we have been put not only to inconvenience but expense in consequence. Last year I myself was compelled to bring before the Auditor a scale of charges in my own case which was entirely contrary to the Schedule, and the bill was reduced in consequence from about £240 to £150. Nevertheless, I was required to pay the costs; but, of course, as I got nearly £100 off the bill, I was able to do so. I am strongly of opinion that these charges should be more definitely determined, and the Auditor ought to be properly paid for the work of that kind which he performs. Under the circumstances of the case, I wish to know how much of this Vote is for work done in that way? The only information I have been able to get in reference to the Vote is that the Auditor last year, according to the Appropriation Account, received in addition to his salary of £800 a sum of £150 11*s.* 6*d.* in the shape of fees. I think it would be better to give him a salary of £1,000 or any definite sum, so that the whole of this sort of work should be done gratuitously. By far the best way would be to provide a Schedule of Charges for Scotland similar to those which exist in regard to England and Ireland.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): The Auditor of the Court of Session receives a salary as Auditor; but he is not bound to take up any new duties put upon him by Statute outside the Court of Session without receiving remuneration.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I have been anxious to move the reduction of the Vote in order to raise a very important question; but on consideration I think I had better not do so. I wish to say, however, that Scotch Members are subject to a species of coercion and compulsion. Practically, they are told that they must first pass these Votes in Supply, or else they will not have any other Scottish Business taken. It reminds me of the story of the schoolmaster who was in the habit of providing his boys with a plentiful serving of pudding in order that they might not eat much beef. The Government are coercing the Scotch Members, who are very quiet and good, not to say sheeplike, and they submit to it. I should like to have moved the reduction of the Vote in order to bring about what is necessary to the taxpayers of Scotland—namely, a reduction in the number of Judges of the Court of Session. The Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Bill, among other things, contains a provision for increasing the salaries of the Judges of the Court of Session. I quite approve of that; but I think the number of Judges should have been at the same time reduced. I feel bound to complain of the way in which Scotch Business is conducted in this House. Scotch Bills are put down night after night, and there is always a chance of their being taken at 2, 3, or 4 o'clock in the morning. That is the way in which the Criminal Procedure Bill has been treated. There has been some discussion upon that outside the walls of this House; but we have not had a proper opportunity of discussing it, because it was run through at an unearthly hour in the morning. That is the way in which Scottish Business is always treated.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! The hon. Member cannot discuss that Bill on this Vote.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: I was only anxious to show that we have had no opportunito of ascertaining what has been done in regard to the salaries of the Judges of the Court of Session.

THE CHAIRMAN: The salaries of the Judges of the Court of Session are not in this Vote.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: No; but the salaries of the Establishment are.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member would be quite in Order in criticizing the Establishment; but he cannot criticize the salaries of the Judges, nor this particular Bill.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: I only wish to say, if I have the opportunity, that while I approve of an increase of the salaries of the Judges of the Court of Session, I think there should, at the same time, be a reduction in the number of the Judges. When taken at an early hour in the morning there is no account, either in the newspapers or in the records of the House, of the proceedings; and I hope that you, Sir, may be able to suggest some method to meet this objection. I have long been of opinion that the number of Judges in Scotland is more than is required; and although, in comparison with the English and Irish Judges, it is right that their salaries should be raised, I think it is altogether an unjustifiable job that the payment should have been raised without the question of their number being considered, because the question of their number is the necessary complement of the plan for raising their pay. The English and the Scotch Judges have never been on the same footing. I may remind the Committee that the Scotch system is something like the French system, where there are a multiplicity of Judges with a smaller amount of pay.

THE CHAIRMAN: I must remind the hon. Member that he is pursuing the same line of argument.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: I beg pardon; I was only leading to the point that the number of Judges ought to have been reduced, because hitherto they have been more in the position of the French than the English and Irish Judges. It seems to me that in reality Scotch lawyers have a great deal too many loaves and fishes. One-half of the members of the Scotch Bar get lucrative appointments. I make these observations with the view of showing that while I feel myself coerced into letting these Votes pass, at the same time I do not acquiesce in what has been done.

GENERAL SIR GEORGE BALFOUR (Kincardine): I think I should best consult the interests of Scotland at this time by not saying anything about the matter; but I will take an opportunity on some subsequent occasion of calling attention to this system of retaining upon the Vote charges which do not properly belong to it.

Vote *agreed to.*

(2.) £23,269, to complete the sum for the Register House Department, Edinburgh.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I should like to ask the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald)—or, perhaps, the question had better be addressed to the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson)—how it is that the Sasine Office, which some years ago produced a surplus, now produces a deficit? There is a large reduction in the amount of fees received, and I want to know whether that is owing to a reduction in the scale of fees? Is that the reason why the fees themselves show this amount of reduction?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): There has been a reduction in the scale of fees. It took effect in October, 1885, when the amended table of fees was sanctioned. It was estimated that it would involve a reduction in the receipts of about £1,700 a-year, and I think the hon. Member will see that that has been realized.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: No; there is a discrepancy of several thousands.

MR. JACKSON: The fees drawn in 1883-4 were £30,706; in 1884-5 they were £29,414; and in 1885-6 they were £28,081. Therefore, there was a reduction between 1884-5 and 1885-6 of about £1,400. In 1886-7 the receipts were £27,100, and the expenditure £34,570. There was formerly a surplus, but that was so long ago as 1877-8, when the fees drawn were £39,996, and the total payments were £36,895. In that year there was a surplus of about £3,000; but it has been a greatly diminishing surplus since.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: The hon. Gentleman has accounted for a reduction of £1,700 which is due to the reduction of fees; but the figures for the last 10 years show that there has been a reduction of upwards of £10,000 in the receipts of fees. I want to know whether that is a *bonâ fide* reduction in the charges made in the Sasine Office in Edinburgh, or whether the Scotch people have become so much less litigious, and have had less occasion to refer to the documents in the Sasine Office?

MR. M'EWAN (Edinburgh, Central): I rise for the purpose of drawing attention to the pay of clerks in the Sasine Office. Prior to 1881, it was entirely a patronage office, and the clerks were not under the Civil Service regulations. They were in the direct employment of the keeper of the office; but in 1881 the office was reconstituted under a Treasury Minute of the 27th of March. According to that Minute, the clerks were divided into three classes — the first receiving £250, rising by £15 a-year to £350; the second receiving £170, rising by £10 a-year to £240; and the third-class receiving £90, rising by £5 a-year to £160. The third-class memorialized the Treasury immediately after the passing of the Minute, and demanded an open inquiry on the subject. They said the Minute was based on a misunderstanding or misrepresentation. The Treasury says—

> "The members of the second-class will be subject to revision hereafter, when experience shall have shown to what proportion of the staff it may be necessary to entrust work which, while subordinate to that performed by the assistant keepers and first-class clerks, is of a more responsible and difficult character than can be required from the junior class of the Department."

Now, Sir, there is no subordinate rank.

I wish to point out that the first, second, and third-class clerks are all engaged on the same class of work—they differ only in salary. The inquiry upon which this Treasury Minute is based was performed in a most perfunctory way. Only two or three second-class clerks were examined. I repeat, the third-class clerks are engaged in the same work as the first-class clerks. In one district a third-class clerk is second in command, although there are three second-class clerks in it. In 1881 there were considerable arrears not in the current work, but in making the abridgments which had been begun prior to 1830, 13 temporary clerks being employed to overtake the arrears. By the Treasury Minute they were incorporated into the staff of the third-class clerks, it being distinctly provided, however, that when the arrears were brought up to date no vacancies which might occur should be filled up. Now, the Sasine Office, which is intended to be self-supporting, as it ought to be, is used by a limited class only—namely, the owners of heritable property. Demands have frequently been made for a reduction of the fees of registration and of searches, and the Treasury Minute says—

> "In view of these considerations, and of the further circumstance that under the scheme of re-organization of the several branches of the Register House, sanctioned by this Minute, there will, for the future, be a material increase in the total cost of the salaries of the staff, while one entirely new item, that of pensions, estimated at one-fifth of the amount of the permanent salaries, will be created. My Lords are of opinion that for the next few years there will be a very narrow margin between the receipts for fees and the expenses which they are intended to cover. They feel, therefore, that it is impossible for the present to assent to any reductions in the existing scale of fees. But while expressing this conviction, my Lords desire that it may not be lost sight of that the establishment is now sanctioned or framed on a scale of numbers which will enable it rapidly to overtake the arrears now outstanding in the abridgments and indices. As soon as this work is concluded, it will be possible to effect a considerable reduction in the cost of the salaries by leaving unfilled such vacancies as may occur, since a smaller staff will be able to deal with the current work of the Register House."

It then goes on to say—

> "My Lords rely on the active co-operation of the heads of the Office in effecting all reductions possible in this direction at the earliest moment practicable; and they will on their part be ready to consider to what extent the present scale of fees may be reduced as soon as the receipts shall show any substantial and continued margin of surplus over the total inclusive cost of maintaining the Register House Departments in a satisfactory and efficient condition."

Now, these arrears were concluded at the beginning of 1883, yet there have been a dozen vacancies filled up since, in defiance of the Treasury Minute. It might be imagined that the increasing work of the Office must have entailed the necessity of filling up the vacancies; but what do we find from the Parliamentary Return, No. 225, presented only this year? The receipts, which represent the work done, have fallen from £31,190 in 1881-2—the date when the new scheme came into operation—to £27,104 in 1886 7, while in 1877-8 they were £39,996, when a much smaller staff sufficed for the work of the Office. The fees of registration have not been reduced since 1873; but the fees for searches were reduced in October, 1885, notwithstanding gradual and extensive decline in receipts; and the result is that for the 10 years ending 1887 the deficiency in the Office was £43,511, while for the 10 years ending in 1877 there was a surplus of £40,579, so that the difference between the two decades was something over £80,000. This defiance of the Treasury Minute has thus been prejudicial to owners of property, because the increased expenditure of the Office has prevented the registration fees from being reduced. On the other hand, the owners have got a reduction of the fees for searches to which they were not entitled, and which appears to have been in defiance of the Minute. The Treasury Minute says—

> "My Lords rely on the active co-operation of the heads of the Office in effecting all reductions possible in this direction at the earliest moment practicable; and they will, on their part, be ready to consider to what extent the present scale of fees may be reduced as soon as the receipts shall show any substantial and continued margin of surplus over the total inclusive cost of maintaining the Register House Departments in a satisfactory and efficient condition."

It is manifest that the fees have fallen off, while the expenditure has not diminished. The position now is that a public Office is maintained only in the interests of a very small class of persons who are the owners of heritable property instead of being supported by that class, has, during the past 10 years, been a burden on the public to the extent of £43,511.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member, I perceive, has been reading from a document.

MR. M'EWAN: Yes; I have been reading from the Treasury Minute, which, I think, shows that instead of there being a profit there has been a loss to the public of something like £43,000 a-year; and, in my opinion, that is a scandalous waste of the public money. But there is another violation of the Treasury Minute which is still in active operation. The Minute of the 27th March, 1886, says—

> "My Lords are of opinion that for the next few years there will be a very narrow margin between the receipts for fees and the expenses which they are intended to cover. They feel, therefore, that it is impossible for the present to assent to any reduction in the existing scale of fees. But while expressing this conviction they desire that it may not be forgotten that the establishment now sanctioned is framed on a scale of numbers which will enable it rapidly to overtake the arrears now outstanding in the abridgments and indices. As soon as this work is concluded it will be possible to effect a considerable reduction in the cost of the salaries by leaving unfilled such vacancies as may occur, since a smaller staff will be able to deal with the current work of the Register House."

And they go on to say—

> "That they will consider to what extent the present scale of fees may be reduced as soon as the fees shall show any substantial and continued margin of surplus over the total exclusive cost of maintaining the Register House Departments in a satisfactory manner. There were 13 temporary clerks employed to bring up arrears who in 1881 were incorporated into the regular staff of third-class clerks. The arrears were overtaken in 1883, and since then 12 vacancies have occurred, all of which have been filled up. The receipts (which represent the work done) have fallen from £31,190 in 1881-2 (the date when the new scheme came into operation) to £27,104 in 1886-7; while in 1877-8 the receipts were £39,996, when a much smaller staff sufficed for the work of the Office than is now employed when receipts have fallen to £27,104.'

Instead of discontinuing the printed abridgments where the search sheets began they are being continued, so that the records are being duplicated, of course adding greatly to the labour of the Office. It looks as if the Head or Heads of the Department were attempting to make work of a useless kind in a vain effort to find employment for superfluous men. Whatever the object may be, the present management is entailing on the owners of property, as well as the public, a burden which, under a better system, could be entirely removed. I have hitherto only alluded to the evils inflicted upon the owners of heritable property and the public by the injudicious and wasteful management of this Office; but the third-class clerks have suffered more than anyone. The Treasury Minute states that the third-class clerks were offered a prospect, when they competed for the position, of being promoted to the status of first-class clerks with the maximum salary of £350 a-year; but in consequence of the crowding in of supernumeraries and violating the Minute by filling up vacancies since 1883 the promotion has been entirely stopped; and judging from the rate of progress which has been made during the last six years, and taking that as the basis of calculation, it would take a third-class clerk 48 years to attain the maximum salary which he would be entitled to upon promotion, and seeing that he may be retired at the age of 60 it is almost a matter of impossibility that he can ever get the maximum salary which was held out as an inducement to him when he joined the Service. The third-class clerks demand a public inquiry, and I trust that the hon. Gentleman the Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) will induce the Royal Commission upon the Civil Establishments of the country to visit Edinburgh and conduct the inquiry on the spot. Let it be borne in mind that this is not the only Office to which the same state of things applies. Officers in the position of second and third-class clerks suffered in a similar way in Dublin; but their position was redressed in consequence of an inquiry which took place in 1883. It was found that there was no difference whatever in the work performed by the second-class clerks and that performed by the first and third; the only difference was in the pay they received. The same state of things applies in Edinburgh to this day; but the result of the inquiry in Ireland was that the Treasury Minute was issued by which the distinction between the second and the third-class clerks in Dublin was abolished, and the position of the third-class clerks was materially improved. I think the same ought to be pursued in regard to the second and third-class clerks in Edinburgh, and I think there are many Members of this House who will agree with me that there are other Offices in Edinburgh which require to be looked into. Also it is a matter of general knowledge that there are Public Offices in Edinburgh to which large salaries are attached which are altogether sinecures, and in regard to which scarcely any work is done; if any work whatever is done it is performed by a poorly paid clerk who never reaches the position which he ought to occupy in consideration of the character of the work which he does. I do not propose to move the reduction of the Vote; but I have called the attention of the Committee to what I consider to be a reasonable request on the part of the clerks, and I shall be guided by the reply of the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury as to the course I may feel disposed to take.

Mr. JACKSON: I have listened with very great attention to what the hon. Gentleman has brought forward, and I have looked through the Treasury Minute which deals with the question. The main point, as far as I can gather, of the grievance which the third-class clerks think they labour under appears, from the hon. Gentleman the Member for Central Edinburgh's statement, to be that when the staff was re-organized the vacancies in the first-class rank were not to be filled by second-class clerks, but by promotion of third-class clerks. There, I think, the hon. Gentleman is in error. I understand that it has not been found possible, hitherto, to reduce the number of second-class clerks.

Mr. M'EWAN: The portion of the Treasury Minute on which the hon. Gentleman relies is based on a misapprehension.

Mr. JACKSON: I am afraid that I cannot accept the view of the hon. Gentleman that this is based on a misapprehension. I have carefully gone through this question with one of the gentlemen who had to deal with the matter when the re-organization took place. I am not prepared to say—I should be very sorry to say—that no improvement could be made. The hon. Member asks that a public inquiry should be held on the spot. Well, Sir, we have a Royal Commission at present inquiring into such questions, and I should have thought the proper course would be for these clerks, if they have grievances, to bring them before the Chairman of the Commission; and I am sure if that were done the Chairman would afford every opportunity for their being heard. I think the hon. Member will agree that, when an important Commission like that is sitting, it would be quite unnecessary to appoint another to inquire into a subject coming within the reference to the other. However, I will look into the matter carefully in conjunction with the hon. Member, and will endeavour, if possible, to make such inquiry as will place the matter on a satisfactory footing.

Mr. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.): I think the promise of the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury is quite satisfactory. This has been a subject of controversy for some time past, and if it is now understood that these Gentlemen will have the advantage of their case being fully heard before the Civil Service Commission I think their object will be gained. Ever since I have been in Parliament, certainly for some 15 or 16 years, the question of the establishment of the Sasine Office has been brought forward, but always from another point of view. It has been urged, in view of the fact that the receipts of the Sasine Office were very much in excess of the expenditure, that the fees should be reduced, and this was done. But all this is now altered, and for the worse. The present charge of the Sasine Office is about £44,000—namely, salaries, £37,000; non-effective charges, £4,000; and stationery £3,000; and the fees received amount to about £35,000; so that this Office, which ought not to cost the public a farthing, costs the country betweeen £9,000 and £10,000 a-year. I do not say that the salaries ought to be reduced, and I do not think that the effect of an inquiry would be in that direction; but undoubtedly the fees have been too much reduced. I do not think it at all a satisfactory position that the Sasines Office should involve a charge on the public of about £10,000.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL: I have no doubt that the Sasine Office and the other offices in Scotland do a great deal of valuable work, and that the money expended in connection with the service rendered for them ought not to be grudged; but I confess that I am unable to say whether this is not altogether an unnecessary office, and that the expenditure upon it ought not to be continued. I do not propose to enter into that question. No doubt, the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury knows a great many things, but he cannot be expected to know everything. I see the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) and the Scotch Lord of the Treasury (Sir Herbert Maxwell) present; and I should like to ask either of them whether the reduction of fees which has occurred in this Office during the last nine years, and which amounts to about £13,000, is really a *bonâ fide* reduction in the fees, or whether it is due to some change in the manner of keeping the accounts, or to any other cause?

MR. WALLACE (Edinburgh, E.): I think the promise of the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury is of a satisfactory character. It does not follow that the desire expressed by hon. Members for inquiry involves a desire for the raising of salaries. My own prejudices have always been against the raising of salaries. Having gone very carefully into the matter, it seems to me that the clerks are entitled to have this inquiry; and I am not without expectation that the result may be in the direction of an adjustment of salaries where it is found that some persons are overpaid and others underpaid. I think it would be well if the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate would give the Committee some explanation of the circumstances under which the reduction in the fees from which the income of the Sasine Office is derived is made. I think teere is some dissatisfaction with respect to the nature of the reduction, and particularly, I believe, as to the haste with which it is made. There are two classes of fees, one of which is kept at its original figure, while the other has been inexplicably reduced. I think it would do a great deal of good if the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate would clear up the reason why the reduction was made. It is not understood that this reduction has been a boon to the general public, but simply an advantage to the owners of heritable property. Many hon. Members think that the owners of landed property have sufficient advantages given to them by law already, and that it is a very great hardship that several thousands of pounds should have to be paid out of the general taxation of the country in order to ease the pockets of these people. For these reasons, I think some reason ought to be given to explain why the fees have been reduced, and why the reduction was made at the time it was made.

MR. JACKSON: I am afraid I cannot give hon. Members the details they ask for as to the reduction of particular items of fees. They were reduced, apparently, partly in consequence of a Memorial received from the Society of Writers in Scotland, and the tables were accordingly prepared in an altered form, and it was then determined that the fees ought to be reduced to a point which would cover simply the cost of transacting the business, but not to be held to cover the non-effective charges or compensations. The present deficiency exceeds £4,000. The fees were £27,897, and the approximate charges came to £28,568, showing a deficiency, exclusive of non-effective charges, of £671. The non-effective charges, including Superannuation Allowances and Compensations, came to £4,083, leaving an actual deficiency of £4,754. It must be borne in mind with reference to the searches, that there has been a great improvement in consequence of the greater efficiency of the staff, and the greater attention paid to the business. I fear that with reference to the official and non-official searches, the position has been practically reversed. In 1878, there were 1,419 non-official searches and 2,863 official searches. That went on a certain period, and the fees were reduced, as has been stated; because in 1883, the official searches had fallen to 1,485, whilst the non-official searches had risen to 2,465. But in 1886, the official searches had risen to 1,775, and the non-official searches had fallen to 1,634. I believe it was held that these fees ought to be reduced to the lowest amount which for that portion of the work could be considered really chargeable—which could be considered really chargeable for that particular work. I understand that the fees now, as far as searches are concerned, are in a much more efficient condition. It is true that searches are still done by another Department; but that I understand will be altered as quickly as possible, and it is hoped that in a short time the abridgments will be complete.

Mr. CHILDERS: The hon. Member has not answered my question. The total charge for salaries, not including the non-effective charge for pensions—that is to say, the charge for salaries and stationery—is still £6,000 more than the fees. If you include the non-effective charge, the difference is still greater.

Mr. JACKSON: I will again look into this question.

Mr. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.): The answer of the hon. Gentleman is satisfactory, so far as the private grievances are concerned; but I would ask the hon. Member if he would direct the attention of the Royal Commission to a public grievance, which is that this Office is overmanned and underworked? I wish, before sitting down, to give a hint to the Secretary to the Treasury with regard to all these Offices in Edinburgh. If you will apply the pruning-knife to all the Public Offices in an unsparing manner, and go in for rigid economy, you may be sure of being supported by all the hon. Members who represent Scotland, with the exception, perhaps, of the four Members for Edinburgh, for whom I cannot speak. You may be sure that the expenditure in these Offices is not viewed with satisfaction in Scotland generally.

Mr. JACKSON: I will undertake to consider the hon. Member's suggestion.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL: How is the falling off in the receipts to be accounted for?

Mr. JACKSON: The hon. Member speaks of a certain period. I have shown that the decrease has been a continuous one. I am afraid I cannot say precisely to what the decrease is due; but I suppose it proceeds from two causes—one, the reduction of the fees; and the other, a less amount of business being transacted in the Office than formerly. But having had my attention called to this matter, I will promise hon. Members that I will make inquiry, and do what I can to improve the existing state of things.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL: It seems to me that the answer of the Secretary to the Treasury shows the extreme inconvenience of not having the Secretary for Scotland in the House of Commons.

Vote *agreed to.*

(3.) £4,000, to complete the sum for the Crofters Commission.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): I feel in rather a peculiar position with regard to this Vote. I should have liked to move a reduction of it; but if I did I should place myself in a false position. The point I wish to raise here to-day is with regard to the position of the Commission at the present moment, and the method in which Section 17 of the Crofters Act has been carried out. If I had been able to raise this point on the Secretary for Scotland's salary, I certainly should have moved a reduction, because the 4th sub-section of the 17th section states that it shall be the duty of the Crofters Commission to hold sittings in places to which the Act applies in such order as the Secretary for Scotland may prescribe. Now, I cannot very well reduce the Vote, because the Commissioners must act wherever the Secretary for Scotland sends them, and all I have now got to point out is that the Secretary for Scotland has not acted very wisely lately in his method of sending down the Commission. At the present time, the Commission is in the island of Uist. The Commissioners have gone there not at the request of the crofters, but at the request of the landowner, who is a lady, and the cases are heard after this landowner has only given 24 hours' notice. The landlord only gives 24 hours' notice and the Commissioners are hearing the cases. But what has happened in my county? Why there have been several hundreds of applications pending for the last 14 months, and these in reference to estates where the Royal Commission on the Highlands and Islands reported rack-renting to exist. There are hundreds of applications from the crofters to be heard, and they are not being heard. A month before the Commission went to Uist my hon. Friend the Member for Inverness-shire (Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh) pointed out to Lord Lothian that this was an inappropriate place to send the Commission to. The crofters, through this Gentleman, their Representative in Parliament, and through their legal advisers, pointed out that this was a time at which the great bulk of their body would be away; and so they would have been, as the Commission would have found, if these people had been able to find their usual employment at the East Coast fishing; but, unfortunately, they were not able to find it, and they returned to the Western Highlands. For Lord Lothian to send the Commission there at this time—when it might have been expected that the great bulk of the crofters would be away—a large number of them to Caithness-shire—was a great absurdity. His Lordship was therefore asked to send the Commission there at this time, and the Commission has gone there. I have heard that out of some 70 or 90 cases taken before the Court, only 12 appeared. I can easily understand that. Only 24 hours' notice is officially given before the cases are heard, and the solicitor who attends to the interests of the crofters has had to protest against that short notice. He declares that in consequence of only having 24 hours notice, knowing nothing about the cases, he is unable to learn anything about them, and is unable to attend to them as diligently as he ought to. He has demanded that at least 48 hours' notice should be given to him in order to enable him properly to defend the cases of his clients. I wish to enter a protest against the Crofters Commission going anywhere at the request of the landlords who are in a position to appoint ordinary valuers to revalue the land, whose decisions can be revised by the Commissioners, if the crofters are dissatisfied with the re-valuation. But seeing that the Commissioners have power to fix the rent, and to modify the rent, it is absurd to send the Commissioners to places like this where they are not wanted—instead of to estates like some of those in Caithness, and to estates like that of General Burrows in the Orkneys and elsewhere, where rack-renting exists, and from which places there have been applications for 14 months to have the Commission sent down. I hope the Lord Advocate will give us some good reason why the Commissioners are now going out to the Hebrides at the request of the landlords, notwithstanding the protest of the crofters, through their agent representing them, and through the Member for Inverness-shire, several weeks before the Commissioners went. I should like now to point out how very unfortunate it is to have the Commissioners sent there at this season of the year. Of course, it is very nice for the Commissioners to go to the island of Uist in the summer time, during the warm weather. It is very much more pleasant for them to be there in the summer than in the winter; but it would be much more convenient for the crofters to have the Commissioners there in the winter time when they themselves are at home. I can, of course, appreciate the fact that during the wild stormy weather of winter it will not be very pleasant for the Commissioners to be in this district. As I have said, the Commissioners going now to Uist will find the fishermen away at the smaller islands and elsewhere, fishing. Well, the Crofters Act, passed this year, was passed for the purpose of stopping the sale of crofters' stock and effects for arrears of rent; but the Commission might just as well have been in the South of France as in Uist. They might just as well have been 1,000 or 1,500 miles from Scotland as in Uist, because of the wretched postal system we have in the Western Highlands. It will take at least four days for any communication from my county to get to Uist, and it will require at least another four days to receive a reply. It would probably take at least nine days for an answer to be received from the Commissioners in reply to a letter sent from the county that I represent—to have letters from those at South Uist and back again—nine days going a distance of a couple of hundred miles, simply because the Postmaster General allows a mail train to remain 24 hours at one station, for the reason that the mails come in ten minutes or a quarter of an hour late for the train which precedes. If we were in the wilds of Africa, or in the backwoods of Canada, the postal arrangements would be much better than they are in this district to which I refer. That, however, is the existing state of things. We wired down to the different solicitors who have charge of the cases in my county. There were about 20 cases not long ago where goods were poinded, and it was a neck-and-neck race to get the necessary orders from the Commissioners to save the stock and goods, owing to the out-of-the-way place to which the Commission had been sent. Now, I have got to complain of one or two other little matters. We really cannot discuss this Vote as we ought to be able to discuss it; but I would call the attention of the Lord

Advocate to the next section—the 18th section of the Act. The 18th section determines that the Crofters Commission shall, once in every year after the year 1886, make a Report to the Secretary for Scotland as to the proceedings under the Act, and that every such Report shall be presented to Parliament. Now, we have not got the Report for this year, and could not get the Report for last year; and the Act provides that the Report should be sent for last year. If we had had a Report of any kind, we should have been able to consider this question, and to fairly discuss it; but in the absence of all information as to the action of the Commissioners—in the absence of all record as to what they have done—it would be rather absurd for us to discuss the matter. So far as the Irish Land Commissioners are concerned, we have quarterly Reports from them; but the Crofter Commissioners have now been for twelve months at their work, and we do not know yet what they have done. Parliament has a right to know, under this Act, the number of actions which have been brought. It has a right to revise the question of crofting parishes. The Act will only apply to certain parishes and counties. We do not know yet—though we may know in reply to a Question which I have given Notice of, and which is to be put to-morrow — how many crofting parishes have been determined since January or February. We do not know how many applications have been made, or the number of parishes which are not made crofting parishes. Then, again, a number of decisions have been given of very great importance, and we do not know anything about them—we have no official knowledge of them; and when we put Questions with regard to the matter in this House, the replies we receive are at variance with the facts of the case, and so different from all the reports that appear in all the newspapers that we are practically unable to know what has been done, and to discuss it. Hence the desirability of giving us some information. We do not know yet officially whether there has been a reduction of rent and a reduction of arrears. I asked a Question of the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury in regard to one month—the month of May. I put the Question very carefully, from information with regard to the action of the Commissioners. I suppose that all that is done by the Commissioners hangs outside the Sheriff's Court, and that the newspapers take a copy of it. Well, the reply given to me showed a difference of £3,000 or £4,000 between the old rents and the new ones. I tried to get a reason for that; but the right hon. Gentleman, instead of giving me the figures for one month, gave me the figures for one month and part of another. We, therefore, have not yet got the information which is necessary to enable us properly to consider this Vote. We are going to pass this Vote, and do nothing at all under the powers given us by this Act, because we cannot act for want of information. I will say nothing at all as to the basis upon which the Commissioners have acted. From the information we have got already, it is plain that there has been a great reduction in rent, and, in some cases, of arrears; but we ought to have some information to let us know upon what principle the rents have been reduced. We ought to know on what principle they have acted in reducing rent in one case by 50 per cent and wiping out the arrears, and in another case reducing rent 25 per cent and wiping off the arrears; while, in others, the rent has been reduced 50 or 60 per cent, but the tenant has been compelled to pay half the arrears. We cannot discuss this matter if we have not got the necessary information before us. Then, as to the working of the Commission, our great objection has been that it will take five or six years to get through all the cases if the old system of working is carried out. But I am glad to see that last week there was a change made, and that the Commissioners are beginning now to do double work—that two of them are meeting to hear the cases, and one of them alone is going over the crofts with the valuer for the purpose of examining the land. Until now these three Gentlemen have been hearing cases together, and the whole three of them have been going over the crofts, and the expense has been very great; indeed, in some cases more than the value of the fee-simple of the crofts under consideration. The only way in which the work can be done efficiently under the Act is to have a couple of Commissioners sitting to hear the cases, and a third Commissioner—say, the junior Commissioner—alone valuing the crofts. I see there is an indication that the Commissioners are adopting this plan. By this means—by getting valuers and assessors who are acquainted with the localities to go round with one of the Commissioners—the word sub-Commissioner is used, but I do not think it is in the Act—satisfactory progress no doubt may be made. And you will save a considerable amount of money. At present you pay £4,200 a-year for salaries. I do not think that that amount is too large at all. Then you pay £1,500 a-year for the expenses of the Commissioners. If you had these local valuers, you would save a great deal of this money, and get rid of the work in a very few years—in three years instead of six or seven. By the plan I reccommend you would not only be able to save money; but you would enable the Commissioners to get over the work in much less time, and give the crofters much greater confidence in the decisions of the Court. It would be a much more efficacious way of doing the work to send these local valuers round, instead of having the same set of Commissioners to go all over the different portions of the Highlands from the Mull of Galloway to the Shetland Islands. In various parts of such a wide district there must be great difference of value; and there would not be the same dissatisfaction with the decisions of the Commissioners if local valuers were associated with them in this work. I do not wish to pursue this subject any further; but if you wish the matter to be fairly carried out, you will require to change the procedure very considerably. Instead of getting over 1,000 cases a-year, you will require to get over 3,000 cases a-year. Now, I hope to hear some reply from the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate to this criticism I have been compelled to make, and I hope to hear, especially why we have no information given as to the principles which have guided the Commissioners, because upon that point we have a great deal to say; and until we have an idea of the principles upon which these Gentlemen act we may be criticizing unfairly. We do not know whether we are getting the value for the money we pay. If we are left without information we may form an opinion opposed to that which, if the circumstances were different, we should form.

MR. A. SUTHERLAND (Sutherland): I think it is rather unusual, so far as I know, that Estimates relating to any Commission or any public body, should be placed before Parliament without a Report of that body being submitted, especially when they are under compulsion by the Statute to issue a Report. The hon. Gentleman who has just sat down (Dr. Clark) has read the clause which necessitates the preparation of a Report after the year 1886 by the Crofter Commissioners. Seeing the nature of the business the Commission have to carry out, and that their action for some time past must, of necessity have been of a tentative character, it might be said that the Gentlemen who filled the post of Commissioners have not had much time at their disposal, and had found it impossible to draw up a Report; but seeing that many complaints have been made of the paucity of work that there is for the Secretary for Scotland, I think that some of the clerks in his office who, presumably, are not overburdened with duties—["No, no!"]—Well, in my opinion, some of the money which has been expended by the country on the Office of the Scottish Secretary might be very profitably employed in relieving the Crofters Commission. I do not lay very great stress on the absence of a Report; but still as it is required by Statute, I think we should have had it—and it would have been convenient for us to have had it—by this time. The hon. Member for Caithness has gone into some criticism on various points arising on this Vote; but I do not intend to occupy the time of the Committee in that way. I should like, however, to call attention to some of the decisions which have been given by the Commissioners, although I have no intention of impugning their conduct generally, as far as the reductions which they have granted are concerned. For the Gentleman who presides over the Commission I have the greatest possible respect. I think he is eminently qualified to discharge the duties he has to discharge; but for the lay Commissioners I must say I do not entertain the same respect. It will be in the recollection of the Committee that at the time of their appointment protests were made—it will be remembered that these appointments were made against the recommendations of many who understood the matter in a special way. I would just bring before the notice of the Committee one typical case of the decisions which have been given. The facts are these—I could give the name of the croft to which it refers, and the name of the crofter to whom it refers if necessary. Here is a case in which the forefathers of the crofter had been in possession of the croft for 100 years up to the time when he acquired it. It had been in his family for many generations. It was stated in open Court as follows:—That in the year 1832 his father paid £8 10*s*. to an outgoing tenant, whose holding was added to his father's holding. In 1834 his father built the present dwelling place upon it at his own expense, all except a slight assistance which was given by the landlord. All the outhouses were built by the tenant at his own expense. The land was cleared, trenched, and works of the value of £500 were carried out, as I say, at his own expense. In 1878 the father of the present tenant died, the present tenant succeeded, and the rent was raised from £6 5*s*. to £11 5*s*., an increase of almost 100 per cent on the tenant's own improvements. Then the Commission came, and the tenant applied to them, complaining that he was overrented, and asking to have a fair rent fixed. The decision of the Commissioners was that his rent should be increased to £14. So that since 1878, or during the lapse of nine years, the tenant's rent was increased 124 per cent altogether on his own improvements. Now, under a sub-section of Section 6 the landlord or the crofter may apply for the fixing of a fair rent, and obtain a visit from the Crofter Commission, and the Crofter Commission, after considering all the circumstances of the case, and particularly after taking into consideration any permanent improvements on the holding which may have been constructed or paid for by the crofter or his predecessors in the same family, may determine such fair rent, and fix the rent accordingly. What I say is, that this section of the Act has not been given effect to in the case I mention, because this man who has made these improvements would, if he had been fairly treated, have had his rent reduced. I am speaking from personal knowledge on this point when I say that effect was not given to the Act in fixing the rent. I think that, in a case of that kind, there should be some way of appealing against the judgment of the Commissioners. The holding, so far as I know, was visited only by the lay Commissioners. The Chairman of the Commission, who, I suppose, is a legal Gentleman, does not presume to have any knowledge of the value of land. I think that in a case of this kind—this is only a typical case of a number decided at the same time—an appeal should be given, as the Commissioners have not carried out the intention of the Act.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): I think that no one can complain of the manner in which hon. Members who have addressed the Committee have spoken on this subject. I think that must arise, to a great extent, from this—that in their inward consciousness hon. Members feel that, although there are some things of which they have a right to complain, the Commission, on the whole, has been doing extremely satisfactory work, and extremely hard work. Hon. Members complain that the Commissioners have not reported yet. Well, if the Commissioners had spent two or three weeks of their time in drawing up an elaborate report, the first people to complain would have been the crofters themselves—the crofters would have complained that the Commissioners were spending their time in writing to inform the Government what they were doing, instead of getting on with that class of case which the hon. Member for Caithness has said will take five or six years to complete. In the first place, the hon. Gentleman opposite points out that the Commissioners are at present in the island of Uist. I can only say, as regards their being there, that they are there in this state of things—namely, that Lord Lothian, the Secretary for Scotland, in determining where they should hear cases, gave distinct instructions to them to inform him, whether they were satisfied that in all cases the crofters at any particular place could attend if the Commissioners went there, and he was assured that if they went to the island of Uist just now they would be able to get the crofters to attend before the Court. And events have subsequently shown that those who so assured him were perfectly right that if the Commissioners went to the island of Uist just now they would be able to get the crofters to attend in all cases. I find, in a statement which appears in the newspapers this morning, that the Commissioners, having gone to Uist, the Chairman of the Commissioners has stated that, out of 70 cases which had been settled, in only 12 had the crofters failed to appear. He stated that there had been only 12 absentees out of 114 cases, and that of these 12 cases only six of the men were away fishing, three were unwell, two were absent without any reason being assigned, and one happened to be away. Therefore, I think that no reasonable complaint can be made against the Commission being there at the present time.

MR. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.): Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman mean that in every case, except these 12, the crofters were present, or that they were represented by their families?

MR. J. H. A. MACDONALD: They were either present themselves, or represented. The hon. Member says that the Secretary for Scotland, in making a general arrangement as regards the places the Commissioners are to go to from time to time, ought to pay no regard whatever to the landlords. Well, I do not quite agree with him in that. I think that the landlords and tenants should both be considered in this matter; and when we find that the landlady of this estate referred to has, through pure good-nature, allowed her arrears to run up to a tremendous amount—extending, in some cases, I believe, to 12 years—I think that she surely has reasonable ground for asking that the Commission which has been established should say what rent she is to get. She will certainly get no rent until this question is decided; she will certainly get none of them until the Commissioners have given a decision. I think, in her case, it is most reason able that she should apply for the Commission to visit her estate, and that the Commission should comply with as little delay as possible. And I would point out, further, what my hon. Friend the Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark) so candidly admitted,, that it would be very uncomfortable indeed for the Crofter Commission to go to the island of Uist in midwinter. They would be infinitely more shut out from communication than they are now, because if they went to the island of Uist in winter they might be compelled to remain there for a month or six weeks at a time, the island during that period being frequently totally inaccessible. The Commissioners would, under the circumstances, be out of the reach of the other crofters in the other islands and on the mainland. I would point out further that very often, as regards visiting these islands, it is not only a question of comfort, but of possibility. Supposing the Commissioners determined to go to Uist on the 1st December, and made their arrangements accordingly, they might find it impossible to carry out their intention, and at the time the crofters wished them to be there, and expected them, they might be unable to attend. Is it suggested that in the very depth of midwinter the crofters themselves would be willing to go long distances over the hills to the places where the Courts were to be held—to places in which there might be no accommodation for them, and where they would not be able to get any comfort at such a period of the year? I think that undoubtedly good cause has been shown for the visit to Uist being taken at a time of the year when the conditions are favourable for all parties. I perfectly understand that the crofters may grumble about it. They have a right to grumble; but I hope hon. Members will agree with me that while people have their right to grumble, it is impossible to make these arrangements without making some cause for grumbling, reasonable or unreasonable. With regard to the smaller matters to which the hon. Member has referred, he has said that the answers he has received in this House on more than one occasion have been, to some extent, at variance with the published reports in the newspapers. No doubt, there was a difference of that kind on one or two occasions. It has been owing partly probably to inadvertence; but I can assure the hon. Member when he tells us of what has been done by the Commission—when he tells us of the enormous reductions, and that the principles upon which these reductions have been made are not known—when he tells us this, and complains that no official Report has been presented—he is hardly fair to the Commissioners, because I would point out this, as I said before, that the Commissioners would have been going outside the lines of what was advisable or right if they had spent their time in drawing up a Report, not for a whole year, but for part of a year, before their first year's work was completed. Their duty was to give themselves a general knowledge of the work with which they were intrusted by going to different places throughout the country. It was necessary for them to obtain a general knowledge of the state of the country and of the state of agriculture; and I say further, I do not think they could have done what the hon. Member quite properly suggests—namely, in the early days of their labours—have split up their work, and have sent one of their number to examine some district and take evidence. I think it was the bounden duty of the members of the Commission to work together. It was necessary for them to confer together, and to get a general idea of how their work could be best conducted, and what was the best mode of forming opinions. Having done that—having come to a general understanding and agreement as to the nature of their work—they could then send one of their number away, knowing that he was carrying out not only his own views, but those of his colleagues, and that he was acting not only upon his own experience, but upon the experience of the whole body of Commissioners. Under these circumstances, a Commissioner thus sent away would give a decision in which all the Commissioners could agree. I submit that it would have been a most unwise thing for them to have sent away one of their number of whose capacity for work and whose mode of operations they had no experience, or the soundness of whose views generally they knew nothing of, and then to have endeavoured themselves to form a judgment with regard to any report he made. Now, when the Commissioners have been together for some time, and understand each other's way of working and of considering matters, they can with confidence allow one of their number to go and make valuations. I certainly think that the Commissioners have taken the proper course up to this time. They are, I believe, now endeavouring to get through their work quickly, and I believe the decisions they are now giving will be satisfactory both to crofters and landlords. There is only one other matter which I will refer to. The hon. Member for Sutherland (Mr. A. Sutherland) has spoken of a certain case. Well, Sir, I think we must all of us be aware of this fact—that when appeals are made in these cases, there is an able lawyer sitting on the Commission. The hon. Member stated his belief in the fairness of the Commission. I have had occasion to know that gentleman for a good many years, and I must say I never knew a man who had a more earnest desire to act fairly and conscientiously, and to do his duty with care; and I am sure from all I have heard and know in my communications with Mr. Brand—and I have seen him on several occasions since he took the Chairmanship of this Commission—that he carries out my estimate of him. I am sure we could not have had a better man, a more earnest and energetic man, than Mr. Brand. As to the other Commissioners, I am not personally acquainted with them; but I cannot help thinking that, on the whole, their work has given considerable satisfaction. I do not know what further reduction of rent hon. Gentlemen opposite would have got from other persons; but I hold that there is nothing before the Committee or the public to indicate that these Commissioners have not acted to the best of their lights, or that they are not men of skill, and eminently suited for the position they hold. The hon. Member complains that there is no appeal; but I can hardly concur with him in that. An appeal means more expense. An appeal means loss of time——

Mr. A. SUTHERLAND: As I understand it there is an appeal provided for in the Act from the Sub-Commissioner to the Commissioners, or from one Commissioner to two Commissioners; but what I complain of is that that arrangement has not been carried out, and that in cases decided by a Sub-Commissioner in Sutherlandshire, there have been no appeals allowed.

Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD: The hon. Member is mistaken in this matter, for there has been no Sub-Commission sent out. There is no Sub-Commission now. As I understand it every decision given up to the present time is a decision of the Commissioners as a body, and I do not know of any appeal of the kind referred to by the hon. Member. I understood the hon. Member to complain that there was no appeal given from the decision of the Crofter Commission to another Court. He used the word "appeal," and seemingly used it in a different sense to what is ordinarily implied; but now I understand what he meant. There cannot be any ground for the complaint he made; because I understand that every decision given has been given by the whole body of the Commissioners. If there has been any action on the part of an individual Commissioner previous to the decision being given, the discussion and consideration given by the Commissioners themselves to what the individual Commissioner might have reported is something in the nature of an appeal. I do not know of any other appeal except one of that nature. I think I have answered, or, at any rate, have attempted to answer, all the points raised. All I can say further is this. The noble Marquess the Secretary for Scotland (the Marquess of Lothian) is most anxious that the work of the Commissioners should be pushed on, and I can assure hon. Members that the suggestions they have made will receive full consideration, and will be carried out if possible.

DR. R. MACDONALD (Ross and Cromarty): I may say at the outset that the work of this Commission will have to be done all over again. It is the Irish Land Question all round again, and I can easily explain it to the House. These crofters, or their ancestors before them, were put down on the hillsides to do the best they could with the land. They lived upon it and improved it, and now the Act tells them that the Commissioners are to take into account all the improvements which have been made. I say that with 20,000 acres of land lying waste within 50 miles of this House for which you cannot get a tenant at a penny an acre, it is ridiculous to think of charging men in the Highlands 5*s.* an acre for their crofts. I have looked over the decisions of the Commissioners, and have made calculations, and I find that the average rent that they have fixed is 10*s.* an acre for every inch of it. I ask, is that right, or just, or fair? I declare, under the circumstances, that this Crofter Question will be just as much a thorn in the side of this Government, and of every other Government, until justice is done by the Commissioners, taking into account the improvements which have been made on the land by the crofters. The right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate speaks of the internal consciousness of hon. Members on this side, but his assumption in that matter I deny entirely; and there is one other remark which the right hon. and learned Gentleman said about the attendance of crofters personally at the Commissioners Court in Uist, about which I wish to say a word. I would tell the right hon. and learned Gentleman that if he looks at the newspaper to-day he will find that scores of people appeared before the Commissioners by deputy, either in the person of their wives, their nephews, their sons, and so on. And if he has received information to the effect that the crofters appeared themselves in the large number of cases in which he says that an appearance was put in, he has evidently been misinformed. I shall take care myself to get the exact number of the personal appearances that have been made, from the gentleman who is at present acting in the crofters' interests.

MR. J. H. A. MACDONALD: Might I explain? I understood the hon. Member—I did not say——

DR. R. MACDONALD: My hon. Friend asked the question—the hon. Member for North Aberdeen (Mr. Hunter) asked if the right hon. and learned Gentleman meant to say that in every case except 12 the crofters were present or that they were represented by their families, and I understood the right hon. and learned Gentleman to say that they were represented.

MR. J. H. A. MACDONALD: I must have misunderstood the hon. Member. What I thought he meant was, did the crofters appear by agent or council. I did not mean to say that the individual crofters themselves appeared, but that they did appear by members of their families or by agent.

DR. R. MACDONALD: They could not appear themselves because most of them were away from home, and consequently were not in a position to attend or give evidence. The hon. Member for Sutherland (Mr. A. Sutherland) has made allusion to one case where he thought the decision was unjust.

MR. A. SUTHERLAND: It was a typical case.

DR. R. MACDONALD: Yes; my hon. Friend mentioned it as a typical case, but I have here a list of cases. I will not trouble the Committee with all of them, but I will give a few to show the way in which the Crofters Commission is doing its work. Here is the case of a man whose old rent was £11. His fair rent was fixed at £6 3*s*. His arrears were £35, and of those arrears he has been ordered to pay £28. This man's rent has been reduced to nearly a-half, and yet he is ordered to pay four-fifths of his arrears. Is there any justice in that amount? He ought to obtain a much larger reduction than that. Then in another case the old rent was £11, and the new rent was fixed at £6 3*s*. The arrears were £34 4*s*., and the man was ordered to pay only £8 of them. In another case the old rent was £11 15*s*. The new rent was fixed at £4 13*s*., almost a third. The arrears were £35 5*s*., and of that the tenant was ordered to pay £5. His rent is reduced a-third of what it had been before, and he has only to pay a small portion of his arrears. In another case, however, where the old rent was £7 5*s*., and the new rent £2 4*s*., the arrears were £5 and the tenant was ordered to pay every penny of them. Here is another case that the right hon. and learned Gentleman may be anxious to hear—the case of William McKenzie, of Mickdale—I give the right hon. and learned Gentleman the name so that he may verify it himself. It is taken from a newspaper report of the return as signed by the Commission. The old rent was £3 10*s*., and it was reduced to £1 10*s*. The arrears were £2 10*s*., and the man has been ordered to pay every half-penny of them. Can any Member of this House say that that is just? I have here innumerable cases of this kind. Here is another case—old rent £13 10*s*., new rent £6 10*s*.; arrears £8 6*s*., and the tenant ordered to pay £4 of them. It is not enough that the landlords have been taking double the rent from these poor people which they ought to have received for all these years, but they are to be allowed to collect their arrears. The Commissioners ordered for the most part the old rent should be paid by these people again. Surely, it must be obvious to everyone that people who cannot pay even their present rents will never be able to pay their old back rack-rents for which they are in arrears. As I have already told the Committee, Parliament will have the same trouble to deal with which it has had to face in the case of Ireland. It is impossible for people to pay their rents, and if a decision is given, I do not care by what Commission, I put it to any hon. Member of this House to say if a man has taken up land which is worth at the most 1*s*. an acre, that all the rent he ought to be called upon to pay should be 1*s*. I find that the reduction of rent all round, taking it on the average, is about 33 per per cent—that is to say, looking at all the decisions which have already been given. It may be said that that is a very great deal, and that the crofters ought to be thankful; but I have some cases here of reduction of rent on the large farms into which all the good lands are thrown. I have taken some of these cases from the papers, and they refer to large farms in the Highlands—the crofters we know only get the scraps which are left on the hillside, or by the sea-shore, which they have to do with as best they can. I find here that on the large farm of Westerdale in Caithness, the rent was reduced 50 per cent, although there have been no improvements effected by the tenant. On two large farms on the Kilmuir Estate reductions of 33·3 per cent and 27·5 per cent have been made. On the Rosehaugh Estate of the National Provident Institution, when they found that the Commissioners were reducing the rents of the crofters on their property from 40 to 50 per cent, they sent down a valuer to value their farms. They found that the rents on those farms were considerably higher than they should be, and the valuer sent in an average on that estate, excluding leaseholders and taking improvements into account, in consequence of which the rents were reduced from 50 to 70 per cent. Take a case which occurred the other day and which is mentioned in *The Invergordon Times* of last week. It is a farm at Huntingtower, two miles west of Perth, it was let originally at a rental of £639, but it has now just been let for £350, and no improvements are to be considered there, although the previous tenant did spent £1,000 upon them. Then there is the case of a farm—the Montagu farm—which was formerly let at £500, but has just now been let at £300. I ask how can the crofters be grateful to the Commission for doing less than the landlords all round are doing on the large farms? How can anyone assert that justice is being done to the crofters? The right hon. and learned Gentleman asks us what percentage we want in the reduction of rents. Well, I have indicated that already. If a rent is now 10*s.* or £1 an acre, it should be reduced to 1*s.* an acre; and then we shall be satisfied and not till then. The right hon. and learned Lord Advocate may shake his head and say that that is impossible, but we find a good many things which have been declared to be impossible come to be possible in the long run. Now, I want to point out to the Committee what has been done in connection with the Crofter Commission. This Commission has reduced rents £2,114 and abated arrears £6,000—that is to say, that it has dealt with £8,000. We find the expenses of the Crofter Commission is £6,000 this year, and £3,930 last year—that is to say, that they have already cost the country a great deal more than the total amount of reductions they have effected. Would it not be better, then for the House to make a gift to these crofters or to the landlords? Would it not be cheaper for Parliament to say to the landlords—"There are your rents" and be done with it? In the calculation which has been made of the cost of the Commission, no account has been taken of the loss of one of Her Majesty's ships, which would probably amount to about £14,000. It would have been three times better for this House to have paid the reductions which have been effected in the rents of the crofters than to have gone to all this trouble and expense. When we find that such decisions as I have referred to are given, how can we expect these crofters to be satisfied? What good is it for a man to have a rent of £4 reduced to £3, when he is unable to pay half that amount? It does him no good at all, and I therefore say, give him justice—give us the benefit of the Act passed by this House. We say, take account of the improvements which have been effected by the crofters, even if it is 1,000 years back. The Act says that, after all the improvements made by these people and their forbears, the landlord is to get value for the land as it was originally. Then we shall be satisfied; but there is no other possible way of satisfying us. We shall continue to suffer injustice if we do not get this. We are agitating in the Highlands and islands, and we shall continue to agitate within the law. We are asking this House and the country to put into proper operation the Act which has been passed by this House. I do not know that I have anything further to say—["Hear, hear!"]—and I do not think it would be proper for me to say anything more, because there is a great deal of Scotch work before the House to-day, and I do not desire to lose a moment of time. I must appeal to my hon. Friend who says "Hear, hear!" when I say I am going to sit down, to consider this subject carefully, and to say whether, after all, the case we have made out is not one worth the House listening to. I do not make statements without figures. I can prove every figure which I have used, and I appeal to this House whether justice, or anything like justice, is to be given to the crofters.

MR. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.): There is one question I would like to ask the Lord Advocate, and that is with reference to the first Report of the Crofter Commission. It is true that under the Act it is provided that the Commission "shall, once every year after 1886, make a Report to the Secretary for Scotland." Now, I cannot but think, or help thinking, that the intention was, considering that the Crofter Commission was appointed in the middle of 1886, that after their operations during 1886, they should by the middle of 1887 make a Report. But we have now got through nearly two-thirds of 1887, and no Report has appeared. But, apparently, the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate appears to think that there has been no delay. He gives as a reason for no Report having appeared, that in the early part of the year the Commission was too busy to draw up a Report. If the interpretation I have given is the true interpretation to be put upon the clause, in respect of what year will the first Report be made? Will it be in respect of the year 1886, or in respect of the year 1887, or in respect of some imaginary financial year taking in part of 1886 and part of 1887? There is nothing of that kind in the

Statute, and I must say that it should rest on the right hon. and learned Gentleman to look to the Crofter Commission to make a Report at once with regard to 1886. All these rules were laid down in 1886, and surely we should have received some statement from the Commissioners bearing upon their work for that year. I do not think we should be obliged to wait until the end of the present year before the Crofter Commission make a Report. The words are "that they shall once in every year." Therefore it would be in this year, the right hon. and learned Gentleman will observe, that the Report should be made. It is not "for" every year, but "in" every year. Would it not be well that they should at once make a Report for the six months in 1886, and then, early on next year, make a Report for the whole of 1887?

Mr. PROVAND (Glasgow, Blackfriars, &c.): I quite agree with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) that these Reports should be furnished without delay. There is a great difficulty in obtaining any information with regard to the work done by the Commission. The only information we do get is that contained in newspaper paragraphs, and to ask a question in this House upon the information contained in those paragraphs would be to lay ourselves open to correction, because they are not official and many of them no doubt contain misstatements. As a matter of fact, we have no official information at all except that we have spent £10,000 upon the Commission. Now, the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) stated that the Commissioners would be blamed by the crofters themselves if they had spent six months in preparing an elaborate Report; but I point out that an elaborate Report is not what we want. We will take such a Report as the duties of the Commissioners give them time to prepare. Now, there have been several months during the present year in which the Commissioners have not been sitting, and that interval might have been used for the preparation of the Report that we want. The Report of the proceedings of the Irish Land Court is not an elaborate document; and I am sure that the particulars which are in the possession of the Crofter Commission could have been copied out and presented by this time, and such as they are they would be valuable. But, as I have said, we have no official information whatever, except that we have spent £10,000 upon the Commission; and I therefore hope that we shall be supplied with whatever Report can be got, and that soon, say, within two or three weeks.

Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD: I should read the section of the Statute, as meaning that if the Crofters Commission at any time in 1887 make a report of their proceedings, that would satisfy its requirements. As far as I can understand hon. Gentlemen opposite, it is that they are anxious to have a Report as early as possible. I think the most sensible view is that the Crofters Commission should issue their Report as they finish each year's work. If hon. Members will communicate with me on this matter, I should be glad to lay the representation before the noble Marquess the Secretary for Scotland (the Marquess of Lothian), who, as well as the Commissioners themselves, will, I have no doubt, be happy to give effect to it.

Dr. CLARK: I am not altogether satisfied with the statement of the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate; because I may say that the information we asked for is posted outside the door of every Sheriff's Court House; and if the reports which are so placed were laid upon the Table of this House, nearly all the information which we require would be found in them. There is one very important point on which we require some information. Time after time, during the discussion of the Bill, we pointed out that the clauses in reference to the increasing of holdings were practically useless, and therefore it is that the information we require is not only as to the reduction of rents, but also with regard to the increase of holdings. Of what use is it to the crofter that his rent is, perhaps, reduced from £3 10*s*. to £1 12*s*., or from £1 10*s*. to 5*s*.? The only thing that will be of any value to him is the increase of his holding, and I doubt whether, out of 1,000 cases that have been dealt with, there is 1 per cent in which an addition has been made to the holding. I may say, after the efforts I have made to get at the facts, that there has not been an increase of 1 per cent. The only way of solving the difficulty is by giving an increase of land; and the facts being as I have stated, the clauses of the Act introduced for the purpose of increasing holdings have become a dead letter. I admit that the landlord ought to be considered; but I hold that they should be considered only after the crofter. At Uist the solicitor for the landlord only served the applications on those crofters whom it would best serve the landlord's purpose to have before the Commission, and the solicitors for the crofters only got the notices on the day on which the cases were to be heard. I say that the Commissioners should go first to those places where the Royal Commission has reported that rack-renting exists; and that when the claims of the crofters in those places have been done justice to, the landlords should be considered. What the Commissioners should do is to reduce the rents on those farms on which the farmers can live—farms of £15 or £20 valuation; farms of the middle size—but they have not attended to that class, they have only dealt with the large holdings and the very small ones. I know the case which the hon. Member for Sutherland (Mr. A. Sutherland) has referred to—where the tenant's rent has been raised on his own improvements—and I have information that the Duke of Sutherland himself was about to reduce the rent. If the Crofter Commission had not gone down to the district, it is probable that the rent would have been reduced; but the result of their going there was that it was increased; and there are one or two other cases in which hundreds of pounds have been spent by the tenants whose rents have been increased. All I ask for is information, not for the purpose of going into the cases now—because they will be dealt with by us when the proper time comes—but in order that we may see the work actually being done by the Commission; and unless we get that information, I can assure the right hon. and learned Gentleman that next Session will show a very different state of things from the present.

Vote *agreed to.*

(4.) £146,537, to complete the sum for Police—Counties and Burghs, Scotland.

MR. MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright): This Vote raises a question of great importance, which concerns every county and every burgh in Scotland. I observe that there has been an annual increase of this Vote, and considering that crime is not on the increase, and that, generally speaking, there has been a large diminution of crime throughout the country, it is difficult to see how this large annual increase arises. It may strike some hon. Members that £1,500 a-year is not a very large increase; but when we consider that there are only 56 men added to the Force—35 in counties, and 21 in burghs—whose wages are at the rate of about 18*s.* a-week, which will amount to the sum of £50 8*s.*, it is difficult to know how the remainder of the £1,500 is expended. What I find fault with is this—that although it may be said that as half the grant is paid by the counties and burghs, and half by the Government, the former are as much to blame as the Government, and we have continually put upon us extra expense, which we have to discharge. We have the expense of clothing, boots, great coats, and other matters. It may be further urged that these expenses are practically compulsory, and that the Commissioners of Supply have no other course open to them than to comply with the regulations of the Home Office. I hope, however, that the authorities at Dover House will exercise their control in order that we may not have a continuance of these increased charges and expenses thrust upon us, because when we consider that the local rates are annually increasing, and that the means of meeting them are largely diminishing, it does not behove us to increase unnecessarily, as it seems to us, the expenditure in connection with the Police Force. We think we are paying quite sufficient, and we believe we have ample security afforded by the law for the protection of our property; but we do object to the Government, or any authority, thrusting upon us expenses which we think unnecessary, and therefore ought not to be borne.

MR. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.): I hope we shall have some information from the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) with regard to the dispute about the number of police in the County of Inverness. It will be in the recollection of the House that attention was called to a scandalous waste of public money in sending police and soldiers to Skye in order to collect rents which nobody had refused to pay. Since then the Commissioners of Supply for the County of Inverness, who are landowners, and represent the landowners exclusively, have come to the conclusion that the Force in Skye should be largely reduced; and that is a subject on which the Commissioners are to be considered the best authority. It appears, however, that a very wild and irresponsible gentleman—Sheriff Ivory—has interposed his veto, and the question is now under consideration by the Secretary for Scotland, and I wish to know what is being done in the matter?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): I understand that the Police Force in Skye will soon be reduced.

Vote *agreed to.*

(5.) £63,494, to complete the sum for Prisons, Scotland.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): When the Vote for English Prisons was before the Committee a few nights ago, I had occasion to call the attention of hon. Members to the great disparity of pay as between the surgeons in English and Scotch prisons. I pointed out that whereas the former received salaries between £400 and £600, the surgeons in the Scottish prisons only received salaries of £200, rising to a maximum of £300. I was about to refer to the case of a surgeon in the Glasgow prison; but as the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate gives me to understand that it has been settled, I need not go into it, and will simply add as one reason for removing the disparity which exists, that while the surgeons in prisons in Scotland get only half the pay of the English prison surgeons, they have to do more work.

MR. MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright): I would point out that there has been considerable expenditure that might have been prevented under the new system of prison building in Scotland as compared with the old system. It appears that in building the new prisons the architects and others were at fault, and that a much greater expenditure than was expected has been incurred in connection with them in order to put them in an efficient state. Perhaps the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate can give us some information on the subject.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): I must admit that in years past there was something not quite satisfactory with regard to the plans for sanitary work, and so on; but the matter has been occupying attention.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I am confirmed by this in the opinion I have always held—namely, that the system of centralization with regard to prisons would not lead to economy.

Vote *agreed to.*

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. Mason.*)

DR. CLARK: As the remaining Scottish Votes contain little contentious matter, I think we may finish them before Progress is reported.

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): Of course, the Government will be very glad if these Votes are finished, but I can assure the Committee that it is only with the desire to meet the wishes of Scotch Members as far as possible that the present arrangement has been made.

MR. PROVAND (Glasgow, Blackfriars, &c.): My reason for wishing to go on with the Bills on the Paper rather than the Estimates is that the majority of Scottish Members are in favour of that course.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Resolutions to be reported *To-morrow.*

Committee to sit again upon *Friday.*

LUNACY DISTRICTS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

[*Lords.*]

(*The Lord Advocate.*)

[BILL 318.] COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

MR. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee) said, that he had a Motion on the Paper that the House go into Committee on the Bill that day three months, but he proposed to withdraw it. He would, however, make an appeal to the Lord Advocate. He hoped the Government might see their way to accept one of the two Amendments he had on the Paper in order to carry out the views of the East of Scotland on this matter, and he would ask the Lord Advocate if he could now state how far he would be disposed to agree to these Amendments?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (MR. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities) said, he had already stated that the Bill was introduced for a special purpose only, and that the Government were not prepared to accept any Amendment as to any special district or place. Having given that pledge, in consequence of which, doubtless, Scottish Members had refrained from putting down Amendments, he was afraid he must adhere to it. He was, therefore, unable to accept the Amendments of the hon. and learned Gentleman.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) said, he desired, if he was in Order, to move that the Bill should be postponed until after the Secretary for Scotland Bill as a protest against the order in which the Bills had been placed for discussion. The First Lord of the Treasury gave a pledge that the wish of the majority of the Scottish Members would be consulted as to the order in which the Scottish Bills should be taken; but that pledge, unintentionally, no doubt, had not been fulfilled, and the wishes of the majority of the Scottish Members had not been ascertained. If they had been, he believed it would have been found that they were in favour of taking general in preference to purely local Bills, like the one before the House. Only two places, Glasgow and Dundee, were interested in the measure; but their position was neutralized, for while Glasgow very much wanted the Bill, Dundee was strongly against it. It was not right that the Bill should be put before a Bill like the Secretary for Scotland Bill, referring to the whole of Scotland, and proposing to give a small measure of Home Rule to that country. If it had been a question of the second reading, he would not have troubled the House on the matter; but, as the Committee on this Bill would be a continuance of the great fight between Glasgow and Dundee, he would, if he was in Order, like to move the Bill be not considered until after the other Orders of the Day were disposed of.

MR. SPEAKER: That Motion would not be in Order, and, in any case, the hon. Member is too late, as the Motion is, that I now leave the Chair on this Bill.

MR. J. H. A. MACDONALD said, he could assure the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy, that he was not aware of the pledge referred to by him; but two days ago, he saw the Order of Business to which objection was now taken in the handwriting of the First Lord of the Treasury, and it was then shown to a Scottish Member, who raised no objections. Had he known in time that there was any objection, he would have taken steps to have ascertained the wishes of the majority of the Scottish Members.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL said, on Tuesday the Order Book showed the Secretary for Scotland Bill to be the first Order for to-day.

DR. CLARK (Caithness) said, he thought the Government should be complimented for having placed the Bill first. They ought not at that stage of the Session to enter into contentious matter, and all they ought to do was to pass such measures as this, whereby, in consequence of draftsmen's mistakes, powers given had worked unjustly. After what the hon. and learned Member for Dundee (Mr. E. Robertson) had said, they would run through the measure in a few minutes The hon. Gentleman (Sir George Campbell) surely did not expect that they were going to pass the Secretary for Scotland Bill, unless the Session were prolonged till October. He (Dr. Clark) did not expect it.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: I do.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1 (General board may alter or vary districts subject to the sanction of the Secretary for Scotland).

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 11, before the word "application" insert the word "combined."—(*Mr. E. Robertson.*)

Question proposed, "That that word be there inserted."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): I am afraid that

I cannot accept this Amendment. The clause as it stands, in our opinion, provides for all that is necessary in the matter of application.

Mr. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee): The object of this Amendment is simply to restore the law under which the Commissioners of Supply in counties were in all cases necessary parties to the application. If the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate means that he wishes to restore the law to its old position, I think he is bound to accept my Amendment.

Mr. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox): I must oppose this Amendment; because the object of the clause is that, in order to determine the question of altering or varying districts, the General Board should hear any party making the application. If the Amendment of the hon. and learned Member for Dundee were put in it would practically leave it in the hands of the Commissioners of Supply, who might do the very reverse of that which the Act is intended to do.

Question put, and *negatived.*

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 19, after "and," insert "electors, the appointment."—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

Question, "That those words be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 26, after the word "only," insert the words "or combination."—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

Question, "That those words be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clauses 2 and 3 severally *agreed to.*

Clause 4 (Power in certain cases to contract with existing asylum before erecting new asylum).

Mr. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee): I rise to move the first Amendment standing in my name, the object of which, taken in connection with the words which I propose to insert by my second Amendment—namely, "Shall no longer be obligatory on, but optional to district boards," is to remove what I consider to be one great blot on the existing system. I will not repeat the arguments which have been already used by myself and others against the existing system, further than to say that it comes to this—whereever there is a chartered asylum, the district boards are compelled to contract with that asylum, so that they are at the mercy of a non-representative body. It is for the purpose of making it optional to contract with the chartered asylum or not that I move this Amendment. I have also, as an alternative to it, placed on the Paper an Amendment to strike out the whole clause, and the effect of this being to leave things *in statu quo*, it is therefore the milder Amendment of the two.

Amendment proposed, in page 3, line 1, leave out from the beginning of clause to "provisions," in line 2, and insert "The."—(*Mr. E. Robertson.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

Mr. SHIRESS WILL (Montrose, &c.): If by this Amendment my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Dundee (Mr. E. Robertson) had given representation to the ratepayers on the Chartered Asylum Boards, I would have heartily supported it. But what my hon. and learned Friend desires is to have an option left to the parochial boards to go to the Chartered Asylums or not. Now that is to alter the whole of the policy which has been in existence since 1857, and which has worked so well. Now, what is the cause of this action on the part of my hon. and learned Friend? There are in Forfarshire two Chartered Asylums—one at Dundee and the other at Montrose. The charge in each for pauper lunatics is the same—namely, £28 per annum. The Dundee people, having to pay this sum, appealed to the arbitrators in Edinburgh to adjust the charge. The Commissioners ordered the Dundee people to state their case in writing, and ordered the Montrose Board, also in writing, to answer the complaint. The Commissioners reported their decision as appears in the Blue Book. They took into consideration the rates charged by the other asylums in the district and other matters, and decided that there was no cause of complaint as regards the charge. That being so, the proposal of my hon. and learned Friend is an attempt to get behind the decision of the arbitrators, and in some fashion to re-open the question between Dundee and Montrose.

Mr. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox): The meaning of this clause is, that if a certain district is divided, then the existing law which applies to the district as a whole shall apply to the district when divided. It is desired to leave no doubt on that point.

MR. E. ROBERTSON: This is not a quarrel between Dundee and Montrose at all. It is a quarrel between the representative authorities in Forfarshire, in Edinburgh, and in the East of Scotland generally, and the non-representative bodies for which my hon. Friend the Member for Montrose (Mr. Shiress Will) appears. It is not for me to propose representation for those bodies; that is a question which may come up at another time; but, in the meanwhile, all we want is that we should no longer be compelled to contract with the chartered asylums. We want to contract where we can in conformity with the duties imposed upon us, and we want to build asylums for ourselves. That being the position, I think we should go to a Division at once.

MR. WALLACE (Edinburgh, E.): This is not a question affecting Forfarshire alone. I am here to say that it excites as much interest in Edinburgh as in Dundee, and that the feeling is general that there is a great hardship in the parochial boards being bound to one particular asylum, and not being at liberty to select among the different institutions one which may answer their purpose. In short, there are particular asylums which are protected, and the parochial boards simply want the principle of free trade to be guaranteed to them, as it is to others who wish to procure any article of service. I may say that, looking at this as a general question, I sympathize very much with the direction in which the parochial boards of Edinburgh and Forfarshire desire to move. I would have been better pleased simply to have omitted Clause 4 from the Bill. At the same time, as I am challenged to go to a Division, I shall, on general principles, feel compelled to vote for the Amendment before the Committee. I cannot understand how it is that when no one is to be injured, objection should be raised to the parochial boards having the opportuniny of choosing the asylums to which they shall send their patients. There are no vested interests connected with these privileged asylums, and no one would lose a penny by withdrawing the existing monopoly. Economy, I believe, was the object originally contemplated in the Act of 1857; but I think experience has shown that the danger which was then anticipated does not now exist. The only fault which I think can be found with the parochial boards is that they are too extravagant in their expenditure. I have always heard that parsimony, even to the extent of positive niggardliness, was the charge to which they were most exposed. The original object of the clause having disappeared, it seems to me that the clause intended to remedy that should also disappear.

MR. CALDWELL: I think the effect of dispensing with this clause will be to injure the public most seriously; if you give the parochial boards the power to choose the asylums to which they should send their cases the result would be that certain asylums might have rooms for accommodation standing empty, whilst other asylums might be over-filled to meet the demand. Now, the object was to prevent over-filling. We are only asking that if sufficient accommodation is provided, then the Local Authorities should be bound to send their patients to the chartered asylums. That is the object which the Act had in view, and we are seeking to continue the powers of that Act, so that the authorities shall not have power to make increased accommodation unnecessarily. By all means get the most efficient board, and get the work conducted in the most efficient manner; but these are matters for future settlement, and as regards the present Bill they are out of place.

MR. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.): I do not think the question is quite so simple as my hon. Friend the Member for the St. Rollox Division of Glasgow (Mr. Caldwell) appears to suppose. The fact is that there is at the present time, under the Act which it is proposed to alter, an absolute monopoly in certain cases. Formerly, the payment to lunatic asylums from the parochial authorities in Edinburgh was at the rate of £15 a head. That rate was after some years raised to £22; but within the last few years, under the system of monopoly of protected asylums, it was raised to £33 10*s*. per head—an absolutely extravagant and unknown rate. Now, the clause as it is proposed to be altered would give to the Edinburgh people, who feel the charge very much, the power of going to other asylums and getting rates approaching to that which appears to them to be more reasonable. These are the plain facts. The payment now made by Edinburgh is something like £11,000 a-year for lunatics; whereas £8,000 a-year is considered to be ample.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that when a dispute arose as to the amount, a smaller sum was offered to be accepted for the patients in the asylums? That was refused on the part of those who are now complaining, and the Appeal Court raised the sum to £33 10*s*., as against those who would not accept the arrangement for a smaller sum.

MR. CHILDERS: I know all that, and that the judgment was a highly technical one.

MR. J. H. A. MACDONALD: It is a remarkable fact that the smaller sum was refused. I would point out that the proposal to leave out this clause, or set it aside, really comes to this—that the large asylums which have been built, and which are working efficiently, are to be placed at a disadvantage, although they are not working for profit, but entirely for the benefit of the community.

MR. M'EWAN (Edinburgh, Central): The hon. and learned Member for Dundee (Mr. E. Robertson) has stated that while the parochial boards are compelled to offer all their pauper lunatics to the chartered asylums in the neighbourhood, these institutions are under no obligation to take them. But that is not the case with regard to the parochial boards in Edinburgh. In 1844 the parochial boards entered into an agreement with the Morningside Asylum to take all pauper lunatics; at that time the number of lunatics was 105, and it is now 500, or nearly three-fourths of all the occupants of the asylum. The parochial board pays £4,400 for the privilege of sending all their paupers to that asylum. The asylum was built at a cost of £158,000, of which £30,000 has been got from Scotsmen and others in different parts of the country, and £83,000 are the profits derived from rich patients kept in the asylum. There is still a debt of £45,000. Now, what will be the effect of the Amendment, if it were agreed to? It would be that the parochial boards would have the power of building an asylum, which would entail on the ratepayers of Edinburgh an enormous burden, while they have an asylum which has cost £158,000, and is quite sufficient for the requirements of the parochial boards. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) has complained of the excessive charge for the pauper lunatics in Morningside Asylum; but on the second reading of the Bill I proved most conclusively that the charge of £33 10*s*. was far from unparalleled in Scotland, and in reality, as compared with the neighbouring Mid Lothian district, it is a very low rate. In the Mid Lothian Asylum the charge is nominally £28, but when the rent is added it comes up to £41; and in the Glasgow Asylum, when the rent is added, the charge comes up to £31; so that the charge in the Morningside Asylum, so far from being exceptionally high, is moderate. For these reasons, in the interest of the general community of Edinburgh, I must oppose the Amendment of the hon. and learned Member for Dundee.

MR. LACAITA (Dundee): I wish to call attention to the fact that the parochial board of Dundee has made a calculation of the cost of working their asylum; and the estimate is that they can maintain paupers at a lower rate than they are paying to the asylum at Montrose. The estimate has been fully worked out by the parochial board, and laid before the general board of lunacy.

GENERAL SIR GEORGE BALFOUR (Kincardine): I think it necessary to inform the Committee that the general object which my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Dundee (Mr. E. Robertson) has in view is to enable competition to be carried on between Montrose and Dundee. I do not believe that any good can result from such a system. The asylum at Montrose is, in my opinion, carried on with great economy, and I believe the lunatics would suffer if there were any competition between the two asylums.

MR. PROVAND (Glasgow, Blackfriars, &c.): I wish also to express my opinion that it would not be wise to have competitions between pauper lunatic asylums.

MR. DONALD CRAWFORD (Lanark, N.E.): I rise to Order. I ask you, Mr. Courtney, whether the Amendment is relevant to the Bill?

THE CHAIRMAN: It is relevant to the clause.

MR. DONALD CRAWFORD: The object of the Amendment is to repeal a clause in the Act. I submit that it does not come within the Title or Preamble of the Bill.

THE CHAIRMAN: If it were a question of introducing the clause I should have had to consider it; but I have no authority to exclude what is in the Bill as read by the House a second time.

MR. PROVAND: I was saying that I did not think it would be wise to have competition between the lunatic asylums. Although there may be some ground of complaint, the proper way to remedy the grievance is to obtain representatives on the boards of these chartered asylums. The money for these asylums was raised on the ground that the pauper lunatics of the districts would be sent to these asylums. It may be that calculation has shown that lunatics can be maintained at a lower rate than that which is now paid; but, if so, I do not think that ought to be treated as a reason for introducing this Amendment. I find, with reference to Morningside Asylum, from a statement I have, that the directors formerly consisted, amongst others, of representatives from all the parishes in the district; but since they obtained the monopoly of pauper lunatics, those representatives, with the exception of two who came from Edinburgh, have been excluded; and, with these exceptions, the directors themselves fill up all the vacancies, so that they are really self-elected. This is what I think Parliament ought to set aside; and we should try to obtain some alterations in the directorate in the sense suggested by the hon. Member for Montrose (Mr. Shiress Will)—that is to say, that there should be some proper representation of the parochial boards on the directorate of these asylums. When their representatives are on the board, they will be able to see whether the amount charged is in excess of the proper charge. I would point out that in the case which came before the Court of Session in Edinburgh, the Court did not decide that £33 10*s.* was the proper sum; they decided that the parishes were bound to pay whatever sum the asylum directors expended, together with the sinking fund to pay off the debt, and that without reference to the question whether the money was well or ill spent. I admit that this is a ground of grievance; but the true way of remedying it is to go back to the former status, and have representatives of the parochial boards on the boards of these asylums, who will see whether the money is properly spent.

MR. FINLAY (Inverness, &c.): I cannot help thinking it a great pity that the Committee should drift into a general discussion on the question of the monopoly enjoyed by chartered asylums. This is a Bill for one specific purpose—namely, to alter and vary lunacy districts in Scotland. To my mind, it would be rather absurd to suppose that when the new districts are created under this Act the law which has prevailed so long, and which does prevail elsewhere, should not apply in them also. I take it that this is the effect of the 4th clause, and therefore I hope that my hon. and learned Friend who has brought forward this Amendment will feel that he has done his duty, and not press it to a Division.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): Some time ago I prophesied that the Committee on this Bill would be a battle between Glasgow and Dundee; but this Amendment has raised a question between the sister burghs of Dundee and Montrose. I think it quite impossible that we should thresh out the multitude of details involved if we are to do any ordinary business this afternoon. I do not take any part in the discusssion of them in the hope that we may go at once to a Division.

MR. E. ROBERTSON: In answer to the hon. Gentleman who has just spoken, I would point out that I am not responsible for the general discussion that has taken place; and I want to set an example of moderation to the Government, which I trust they will reciprocate. I am going to abandon these two Amendments, and ask the Government to leave out the clause altogether, which, as I have said, is the milder course to pursue. If this proposal is agreed to, the law will be left exactly as it is now, and I claim that on this point I have set the Government an example of moderation which they are bound to reciprocate. I claim also to tie them down to the pledge given over and over again—namely, that they do not want to make any change whatever in the law. Finally, by the course I am about to take hon. Members will not be committed to any expression of opinion upon the general question, to the discussion of which my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Inverness (Mr. Finlay) has objected.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Motion made, and Question put, "That the Clause stand part of the Bill."

The Committee *divided:*—Ayes 107; Noes 35: Majority 72.—(Div. List, No. 417.) [3.10 P.M.]

Clause *agreed to.*

Clause 5 (Statutory provisions relating to district boards (if consistent with Act) applicable to boards elected under this Act).

Amendments made.

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 6 *agreed to.*

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill, as amended, be reported to the House."

MR. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee): Before the Bill is reported I should like to make a concluding appeal to the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate, and it is that so far as Forfarshire is concerned there should no new district formed, because the effect of that would be to subject the county to a still greater burden than is now laid upon it. If the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate will give me such an assurance, or anything which implies that the Government will not look favourably on any proposal to establish any new district in Forfarshire, I shall not object to the Bill passing in its present shape.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): It is quite impossible for me to give any pledge upon the matter; but I can assure the hon. and learned Gentleman that the Lunacy Commissioners, in the event of any application being made, will look carefully into the matter.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): There is one thing the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate might well do, and that is to suggest to the Lunacy Commissioners not to make any change unless they voluntarily allow delegates from the parochial boards to be on the board of management, in order that these boards may have some representation here.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill *reported;* as amended, to be considered upon *Friday.*

SHERIFF OF LANARKSHIRE BILL.

(*The Lord Advocate, Mr. Secretary Matthews, Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland.*)

[BILL 349.] COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) said, he had an Amendment on the Paper which practically meant the rejection of the Bill; but, under all the circumstances, he would not move it, and would content himself with one more protest, unless the Lord Advocate would consent to an adjournment of the Bill. It seemed to him that placing this Bill before the general Bill was a species of coercion, by which they were practically told that unless they passed the Bill they would not get any other. He entirely acquitted the Lord Advocate of any intention of knowingly infringing the Statute—he accepted what he said, that he was not aware at the time what the law was—but it appeared to him, upon general grounds, that the putting down of this personal Bill before the general Bill was a species of coercion and that they were practically told that they must swallow that Bill, or they should not get to their more important measures. It was not a right contention that a gross irregularity should be cured by a Bill of this kind. He could understand that the hon. Member for Caithnsss (Dr. Clark), who did not want the Secretary for Scotland Bill, was very pleased that this small Bill should be placed before it; but he (Sir George Campbell) personally very much wished to get to the Secretary for Scotland Bill. He therefore appealed to the Lord Advocate to allow the Bill to be postponed until the other Scotch Business had been disposed of. As to the merits of the Bill, he quite admitted that Mr. Berry was a very competent man, and since the last debate he had ascertained that he was a Fife man, and, he believed, a friend of his youth, and a very able man. Mr. Berry was a very clever boy, and no doubt had turned out a very clever man, and on personal grounds there was not the least objection to be made to him; but his appointment was a gross illegality, and a gross injustice to the Sheriffs-Substitute of Scotland. He was very glad to find that in answer to a Question the Lord Advocate utterly disclaimed the policy that had been imputed to him of putting a stop to the chronic promotion of Sheriffs-Substitute, because there could be no doubt that the Sheriffs-Substitute had a kind of claim which ought not to be overlooked. He thought the Lord Advocate was perfectly right in resisting the idea that these promotions must be purely local, and if there was a difficulty about appointing one of these local Sheriffs-Substitute, there were plenty of other competent Sheriffs-Substitute to be found in Scotland. He gathered that Mr. Berry's appointment was agreeable not only to the lawyers in Parliament House, but also to Glasgow. Now, Glasgow was a proud place, and looked upon the rest of Scotland as a sort of Nazareth, out of which no good could come. Therefore, it would have been very disagreeable to the Glasgow people if a Sheriff-Substitute had been brought from any other part of Scotland, and this, he believed, was the chief reason for the appointment of Mr. Berry. He did not, however, recognize that that was an argument which ought to prevail. He thought the Sheriffs-Substitute of Scotland, who constituted a most important and dignified body of public servants, ought to have a full share of promotion—a larger share than had yet been given to them; and if there was any objection to the promotion of a Glasgow Sheriff-Substitute, then the Lord Advocate had the whole of Scotland to choose from, but he appointed a gentleman who had not been a Sheriff-Substitute. However, the right hon. and learned Gentleman had admitted his mistake; and if he had been content to bring in the Bill after the other and more important Business had been disposed of, he (Sir George Campbell) would have been perfectly willing to listen to the right hon. and learned Gentleman's *peccavi*. Having now made his protest, as he wished to do, against that course, he would say nothing more on the subject.

MR. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.) said, he had also to complain that that Bill was put down before the Secretary for Scotland Bill and the Technical Schools (Scotland) Bill, from which he inferred that, in the opinion of the Government, it was more important that the Lord Advocate should be whitewashed than important Scotch legislation should be proceeded with. He objected to the Bill on the ground that the Preamble was untrue and the clause inexpedient. What he submitted was this—that the Lord Advocate had very ingeniously raised a species of false issue of a personal character, affecting the merits and qualification of Mr. Berry. He disclaimed any attempt to enter into the personal question, in regard to which there was no evidence before the House; and even if there were evidence on which they could form a judgment, they were not the proper persons to form the judgment as to the appointment of an individual to the office of Sheriff. That was a responsibility belonging to the Officers of the Crown, and could not be assumed by the House, and to attempt to bring that before the House was only to obscure and evade the real issue. What did the Preamble of the Bill say? That "doubts had arisen" as to the appointment being in conformity with the Act 1 & 2 *Vict.* What did the Act say? It said in the plainest manner, in terms which any man, though not a lawyer, could not possibly misunderstand, that a person appointed to the office of Sheriff should be an advocate of three years' standing in habitual attendance on the Court of Session, or acting as a Sheriff-Substitute. It was admitted that Sheriff Berry had not acted as a Sheriff-Substitute, and that he had not habitually attended the Court of Session; therefore his appointment was fully and absolutely illegal, and was an appointment in contravention of a distinct statutory qualification. When the question was first opened he (Mr. Hunter) asked the Lord Advocate what he proposed to do. Did he propose to repeal a statutory qualification and to make the Bill retrospective as regards the appointment of Mr. Berry? If the right hon. and learned Gentleman had proposed a Bill of that sort, and had satisfied the House that the statutory qualification was insignificant, illusory, and unimportant, and ought to be repealed, then he would not have resisted the making of the Bill retrospective with regard to Mr. Berry. But the course which the Lord Advocate took was entirely different. He proposed to leave the statutory qualification as it was, and, notwithstanding Mr. Berry's lack of qualification, he asked the House to appoint Mr. Berry in consideration of his strong personal merits. That seemed to him (Mr. Hunter) to be a wrong proceeding altogether. The Preamble said that doubt had arisen. The fact was that no doubt existed, and nobody alleged it. The Lord Advocate did not allege that there was any doubt —on the contrary, he admitted fully and frankly that it was an entire mistake; that he made this appointment in ignorance of the statutory provision, and that if his attention had been drawn to the Statute he would never have made the appointment. He (Mr. Hunter) did not impute to the Lord Advocate that he would have violated the Act intentionally and deliberately, and quite accepted the explanation that it was done in ignorance; but, under these circumstances, how could he be asked to state that doubts had arisen as to the legality of the appointment? It was asking Parliament to make a statement which, on the face of it, was untrue, in support of a proposition which, he ventured to say, was inexpedient. Coming now to the merits of the case, he would ask was it right that the House should be asked to appoint a man who had not a statutory qualification, because the Lord Advocate did not know? One of the first maxims enforced upon youthful students of the law was that "ignorance of the law was no excuse for any man." So far was that principle carried, that even a foreigner who came into the country ignorant of the law, and who did something which was not criminal in his own country, but which was criminal in this, was held to be not only criminal, but actually punishable. He had not heard it suggested that any person was above that principle of law, and this was the first time that the Legislature had been asked to say that ignorance of the law by a Lord Advocate was sufficient reason for passing a special Act for the benefit of a particular individual. He should like to know what were the overwhelming reasons presented to justify extraordinary legislative proceedings of that kind? It was said that Mr. Berry was a very fit and proper man. Very probably so; and, as he had said, so far as he knew anything about him, he should be unwilling to say a single word to throw the slightest doubt upon that gentleman's qualifications. One part of the Lord Advocate's case was that Sheriff Berry, while Professor of Law in Glasgow, had been allowed also a very considerable practice as an arbitrator in commercial cases. That practice would remain to him, and he could resume his profession in the Court of Session, and would be qualified for promotion in due course; but it seemed to him an extraordinary and unprecedented course for the Government to come and ask that the law of the land should be set aside simply because the Lord Advocate was ignorant of the Statute dealing with the subject. That was the more remarkable as the Statute was not an ancient one—one of James I. or James IV.—but was a Statute of Queen Victoria; and not only so, but it was a Statute many of the provisions of which were still in daily use and force in the Sheriff Courts of Scotland; and it was to him incomprehensible that those who conducted the business of the Lord Advocate's Office should be in ignorance of that law. If ever ignorance was inexcusable it was in this case, and he failed to see how such a blunder in such circumstances was sufficient reason for a Bill of this exceptional and abnormal character. Consequently, he would move that the House resolve itself into Committee that day three months.

Mr. WALLACE (Edinburgh, E.), in seconding the Amendment, said, that his reason for opposing the Bill was entirely of a public character. He thought that a certain strictness should be observed in a matter of this kind. He was not aware that there was any precedent for the Bill, and, at all events, none had been adduced by those who upheld it. He thought they would be establishing a very bad precedent if they passed over in a light manner an appointment of this description. A lesson would be drawn that would encourage carelessness in making such appointments if it became known that where an appointment had been made, legally or illegally, all that had to be done was to legalize it afterwards. He did not see much would, after all, be lost by refusing the Bill. It was said to be very hard on Sheriff Berry; but was it really so hard on him as was represented? Either he knew, or did not know, the law on this matter. If he did, and accepted the office with that risk, he (Mr. Wallace) did not think it lay with Sheriff Berry, or with his friends, to say that it had turned out differently from what he anticipated. On the other hand, if he was not acquainted with the law governing the very nature of his office, he (Mr. Wallace) must say that, not himself knowing anything about him, he viewed with more suspicion the high testimonials of competency and fitness which had been brought forward in his behalf by his friends. If it had been a recondite matter there might have been some reason for looking leniently upon it. The office to which he was appointed was not the office of Judge in the Supreme Court; it was only a subordinate Judgeship, and therefore they might consider it excusable and reasonable that he was not acquainted with high matters of the law; but this was one of the most familiar points, judging from the easy accessibility of information on the matter. They had only to open so common a book as *Bell's Dictionary*, and they would find the whole conditions as to a Sheriffship staring them in the face. It was said on the occasion of the previous debate that it was an old law. It was not so very old at the beginning, and those who said so seemed to have forgotten that it was revived so late as 1870; because in an Act of Parliament then passed in connection, in some respects, with the conditions of the appointments of Sheriffs, it was also laid down expressly that Sheriffs when appointed need not attend the Court of Session, thus abolishing the necessity existing up to that time of Sheriffs on their appointment attending the Court of Session. But it went on to state that "nothing herein contained shall affect the qualification for appointment to the office of Sheriff, as prescribed by the said Act," that being the Act which enacted the requirements which had been quoted by his hon. Friend. The fact that Sheriff Berry was not himself acquainted with those conditions, then, was a consideration that rather took away from the strong expressions used with respect to the hardship that would be entailed upon him if the Bill was not passed. If the Lord Advocate had proposed by the Bill to abolish the qualification altogether, and had given the House to understand that he regarded it as unnecessary, or as a bad qualification, then he (Mr. Wallace) might have been inclined to vary his action; but the right hon. and learned Gentleman had done nothing of the sort, and he understood, from the silence of the Bill, that the Lord Advocate acknowledged the importance and value of the qualification, which he was now going to set them an example of dispensing with, or of treating with lightness. Under those circumstances he thought that, on the whole, while unwilling to appear to be doing anything of an ungracious nature, either to the Lord Advocate or to the friends whom he described as "deserving and well learned in the law," he was bound by considerations of public policy to refuse to give his consent to the passing of the measure, in the hope that in the end no personal hardship would eventuate. The Government would find ways of recompensing anyone whom they led into a position of danger to himself; and in the trust that that might be so, but feeling that the House must be extremely careful in setting no precedent in the way of legislation that might tend subsequently to encourage laxity and carelessness on the part of those chosen to exercise important judicial law or patronage, he thought it would be well for the House to refrain from passing the Bill.

Amendment proposed, to leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "this House will, upon this day three months, resolve itself into the said Committee,"—(*Mr. Hunter*,)—instead thereof.

Question put, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

The House *divided*:—Ayes 111; Noes 38: Majority 73.—(Div. List, No. 418.)

Main Question put, and *agreed to*.

Bill *considered* in Committee, and *reported*, without Amendment; read the third time, and *passed*.

SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND ACT (1885) AMENDMENT BILL [*Lords*].

(*The Lord Advocate.*)

[BILL 360.] COMMITTEE.

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1 *agreed to.*

Clause 2 (Transference of powers and duties of Secretary of State).

On the Motion of The LORD ADVOCATE, the following Amendment made:—In page 1, line 19, leave out "passing," and insert "commencement."

MR. WALLACE (Edinburgh, E.): I beg to move the Amendment which stands in my name—namely, to insert after "Scotland," in line 26—

> "Provided always that no person shall be capable of holding the said office of Secretary for Scotland who is not a Member of the House of Commons, and that the appointment of any Member of the said House to such office should not have the effect of vacating his seat."

Now, I have a variety of reasons for proposing this Amendment. The first one is one of a general character. I think that the possibility of the Secretary for Scotland being a Member of the Peerage should be excluded. I hold that view upon the grounds of general political principles, because I am one of those who are of opinion that the aristocratic principle should be discouraged and diminished in the government of the country. If possible a Commoner should be preferred in all the functions of government. In saying this I believe I am giving expression to the opinion of the great mass of the people of Scotland. I do not deny that there is a small proportion of the people there who believe in the aristocratic principle; that is shown in normal years of political feeling by the small number of Conservatives sent up to Parliament from that country. The number of Conservatives returned is a tolerably correct arithmetical measure of the amount of aristocratic faith in Scotland. The vast majority of the Scottish people are purely and strongly democratic. Scotland has for a long period been subjected to influences the tendency of which has been to produce an extension and development of democratic ideas. The people are more and more feeling a difficulty in understanding why they should give reverence and honour and obedience to any man simply because he is his father's son. There is a growing discontent with the fact that a handful of persons, possessing, no doubt, that qualification, should be empowered by law to raise themselves to claims for honour and obedience above the rest of their fellows. But I do not desire to dwell upon this general consideration; I thought it only honest and frank to avow this as one of my reasons for proposing this Amendment. Now, I desire this Amendment to be adopted for another, and, for the time being, more practical consideration. I desire the Scottish Secretary to be in the House of Commons, because he ought to be easily accessible to the Scottish nation as personified in its Representatives, in order that he may be amenable to their questionings, and that the largest possible legislative advantage may be taken by them of his position, and it is in the House of Commons really that we have the Scottish nation represented. Practically speaking, the Scottish nation is in the House of Commons, and nowhere else. No doubt there are some 87 persons connected with the Scottish Peerage who are necessarily not represented in this House. But even of these there are 51 who are Peers of Great Britain by special creation, or Peers of the United Kingdom; and these noble Lords I look upon rather as Englishmen who have a Scottish connection than properly Scotchmen in any practical sense. They are exotic to Scotland; their positions and their education and their feeling render them, to a large extent, foreigners in Scotland. They are not so much Scottish as shareholders in Scotland; so that really there are only 36 persons, properly speaking, who are identifiable as Scotsmen who are not in the House of Commons. I say, therefore, that the whole nation is here, and that in a large reckoning of this kind we cannot count these three dozen of gentlemen. In large countings we always leave out the odd half-pence and deal with round numbers; and therefore, following this safe accountant's rule, we may say that this is the place where the Scottish nation is to be found. This, then, is the place where the Scottish Secretary ought to be found, that he may be in touch with the people whose fortunes he is to a large extent expected to influence. Then, I desire the Secretary for Scotland to be in this House in order that he may, if possible, aid us in getting a full—at all events a better—attention paid to Scottish Business. I venture to say that Scottish Business, and the satisfaction of the claims of Scottish Business in this House, is in an outrageous and intolerable condition at present. Scottish Business is pushed away into a corner; and all that is given to it are a few scraps time at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning, and two miserable Wednesday afternoons. That is the whole amount of time that has been devoted this Session to the legislative wants of a nation that numbers close on 4,000,000 of people, and that is possessed of a special and very highly organized civilization, embracing complicated, delicate, diversified, and minutely ramified interests—legal, educational, commercial, agricultural, and industrial. Now, I think I am not indulging in exaggeration when I say this is a wrong state of matters. This House gives, I need not say, far more time to Ireland than to Scotland; it gives far more time to Egypt, and even to the pay, clothing, and vagaries of the London police, than it gives to the wants of a nation that is one of your partners in the great Legislative Union. There does not seem to me much chance of improving under the present system so far as Scotland is concerned. It has been practically the same, I understand, since the Union; and I fear that, unless the system is changed, there is very little hope of amendment. Whatever the reason may be I am not prepared to say. This neglect and contempt of the interests of Scotland may be owing to the overshadowing influence of the mere physical bulk of England—500 Representatives can, of course, whenever they choose, outweigh 72. It may, perhaps, be the fault of the Scottish Members themselves. What is everybody's business is nobody's business, and nobody attends to it. It may be that we are too independent of one another—I will not say jealous of one another—or it may be that our appetite for humble pie is more keen than is consistent with our public prosperity. Whatever may be the reason, the fact is undeniable that in British legislation Scotland is, at the present time, practically nowhere. I have some hope and expectation that if the Secretary for Scotland is always vigilantly present in this House, and if powerfully present in the Cabinet, he will have the influence and the power, to some extent, to mend this state of matters. At all events, he cannot make them worse; and the experiment is worth trying whether he cannot make them better. Ireland has her Secretary in this House, and in the Cabinet; and we see what an immense amount of time and attention Ireland has gained for the consideration of her affairs by that arrangement. Perhaps, if we had a Secretary for Scotland with some force of character, we might possibly get something like our own share of attention. What, let me ask, is our fair share? I venture to say, making a calculation on the basis of population, that in a Session like the present Scotland ought to have had very nearly a clear month all to herself. That is a very moderate calculation. Instead of this we have only got the two wretched Wednesday afternoons, and the morsels of legislative offal which have been flung to us at 3 o'clock in the morning. If we make a calculation on the basis of comparative wealth, it will be found we are entitled to a much larger share of the time of the House than we get. Now, let me remind the Committee that the arrangement which I propose would be in accordance with the old Parliamentary traditions of Scotland, which do not merely live in history books, but in the minds of the people. In the days of the Scotch Parliament the Secretary for Scotland was of necessity continually in touch with the Commons, for the simple reason that the old Scotch Parliament was a single-Chamber Parliament. They did not know anything about "another place," because for them there was no other place; and the signs and proofs are pretty clear that they did not merely vote by order. Practically, the Scottish Parliament was an Assembly in which public officials and Secretaries of State amongst the rest were continually present and amenable to the questionings and criticisms of Members. I now come to the second part of my Amendment, which I admit is, perhaps, the most disputable part of my proposal. At all events, I am led to believe it is open to dispute; and that is that on the appointment of any Member of the House of Commons as Secretary for Scotland he shall not *ipso facto* vacate his seat. I would gladly have omitted that part of the Amendment if I had

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I would gladly have omitted that part of the Amendment if I had seen it possible to do so, consistently with maintaining the main proposition. I have tried it in all ways and I am utterly unable to see how I can reconcile the two propositions—namely, to make the Scottish Secretary exclusively a Member of this House, and at the same time provide that when appointed he shall vacate his seat. I invite hon. Gentlemen to work the problem out in their own minds to see whether they can succeed. I have an open mind on this question, and I am willing that my Amendment should be amended. I have no desire to raise unnecessary antagonism with the main proposal. Suppose that a Member of the House is appointed Secretary for Scotland and that upon the plea that the Office is one of profit under the Crown he vacates his seat. Suppose that he is re-elected and he is again appointed Secretary for Scotland he vacates his seat. The same thing will go on again and again in the attempt to appoint a Secretary for Scotland. I have been unable to devise any way of providing that the Secretary for Scotland shall of necessity be a Member of the House of Commons except that contained in my Amendment. In order to secure my main object I am ready to sacrifice the principle that when the Secretary for Scotland is appointed to his Office he shall not be held to have vacated his seat in the House. I do not see any reason for the proposition as a general proposition, and I see still less reason for it as applied to the case of Scotland. The original cause of the rule that when a man was appointed to an Office of profit under the Crown he should vacate his seat was the un-Constitutional attempt on the part of the Crown, or, at all events, on the part of the party who advised the Crown, to secure an improper ascendancy in this House. That cause has now vanished. How can it exist when the Minister of the day is practically a creature of the popular vote, and when all Crown appointments are really indirect popular appointments, and there are many appointments connected with Membership of this House not directly under the Crown which are still indirectly under the Crown, and all these are excepted by law from the operation of the rule that applies to direct appointments. For my part, I have never been able to see any practical ground for distinguishing between the direct and indirect patronage of the Crown in the matter of appointments. At all events, whatever may be the value of the general argument as applied to the Kingdom at large, there can be no doubt that as far as regards Scotland and Scottish Parliamentary traditions there really is no defence whatever for perpetuating the rule with respect to Offices of profit under the Crown, because the causes which led to the rule in England never existed in Scotland. There was never any danger in the Scottish Parliament of the Crown obtaining too much influence. The danger was all the other way. The danger which the Kings in Scotland felt most keenly was what they considered the undue depreciation of the influence of the Crown; and, consequently, there was never in Scotland any such rule as I have referred to. The rule is really and entirely an English rule, springing out of English circumstances and out of English history. It was enacted a few months after the Scottish Members first took their seat in this House under the Act of Union; but Scottish history, traditions, and ideas had no connection whatever with the enactment of this law. I do not know whether there is much more that I can or ought to say upon this question. Before sitting down, however, I must notice one objection of a practical character that may be brought against my proposal. It may be said that to exclude Peers would be to run the risk of a very substantial loss of administrative capacity, and consequent loss to the country. I have considered the point as carefully as I can, and I must say that the risk is infinitesimal—more particularly is it so in connection with the purely Scottish Peerage. I do not speak of the English nobility, but of the purely Scottish Peerage, and I venture to say with respect to them that scarcely without any exception I do not know that a more insignificant aggregate of humanity is at the present moment existing on the face of the earth; and, therefore, I do not see that as far as they are concerned there will be much practical loss to the country if they are debarred from holding the Office of Secretary for Scotland. In any case it is simply a question of the balance of advantage, and I am one of those who are of opinion, taking all material calculations into account, there will be an amount of advantage derived from observing a rule such as that which I propose should regulate this matter. The advantage will far more than compensate for any loss that can possibly accrue. For this reason, and for the other reasons I have endeavoured to explain to the Committee, I beg to move the Amendment which stands in my name.

Amendment proposed,

In page 1, line 26, after the word "Scotland," to insert the words—"Provided always that no person shall be capable of holding the said Office of Secretary for Scotland who is not a Member of the House of Commons, and that the appointment of any Member of the said House to such Office shall not have the effect of vacating his seat."—(*Mr. Wallace.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. A. R. D. ELLIOT (Roxburgh): I do not know that the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for East Edinburgh (Mr. Wallace) ought to be taken seriously and in good faith. A good deal of his arguments were entirely at war with the principles he professes to hold, and it must have occurred to the supporters of my hon. Friend that he was doing violence to some of his own best feelings when he contended that it is not desirable to get the best man we can to put into the Office of Secretary for Scotland. Surely hon. Members must see that if this Office is to be made of use to Scotland, we must, in some degree, exalt the Office, and get the very best man we can find; and if we are to put any limitation as to the class of men from which we are to choose a Scottish Secretary, we shall be inevitably diminishing the weight and the credit which that official will have in this House and in the country. My hon. Friend made most strange remarks in referring to Scottish Peers. He said that a large number of the Scottish Peers were not Scotsmen, and he seemed to contrast their position and character, as Scotsmen, with the position occupied by Scottish Members in this House. I do not complain of that. I am a strong advocate of the Union; but I confess I have seen, as years have gone on, that it has become more and more the practice at every General Election, and even at bye-elections, for the Scottish constituencies to return Englishmen to represent them. I see several hon. Gentlemen sitting here as the Representatives of Scotch constituencies; they are very valuable Representatives, but still they have no connection whatever with Scotland. My hon. Friend the Member for East Edinburgh is very often closely associated with the hon. and learned Member for Elgin and Nairn (Mr. Anderson), who is often associated with the hon. and learned Member for East Fife (Mr. Asquith); and to talk of these Gentlemen as being in some degree Scotsmen, and, on the other hand, to talk of the Duke of Argyll and Lord Rosebery as not being Scotch at all, is really an insult to the Committee, because it is the putting forward of what is nothing but actual nonsense. The hon. Member has given us some information about the old Scottish Parliament. No doubt, it was a very interesting specimen of the single House system; but it was not the case that there existed anything in the nature of exclusion of particular persons from particular positions or offices. This Amendment is not an Amendment to put Peers and Commoners upon the same footing; but it is an Amendment to prevent Peers—though otherwise well qualified—from taking a position which they may usefully fill. I wonder if the hon. Member has considered what may take place. I suppose that from time to time a Conservative Government will be in Office; and if ever again Parties in Scotland are divided as they used to be, not between Unionists and Separatists, but between Liberals and Conservatives, it is very probable that Liberal Members of this House will, as before, be largely in excess of Conservative Members. There might be some difficulty in selecting, from the limited number of Conservatives returned from Scotland, a Gentleman of influence and ability to fill the Office of Secretary for Scotland. I believe that all Scottish Members wish that the Secretary for Scotland shall be a Cabinet Minister. After the Election of 1880, it used to be a common joke in Scotland that all the Conservative Members from Scotland could travel to London in one first-class carriage. By this Amendment one of those six or seven Gentlemen would necessarily be a Cabinet Minister. The hon. Member said that Scotch Peers are not Scotsmen in a sense in which he is a Scotsman, whatever that may mean. He concluded that they are unfit to take part in the representation of Scotland in this House, because they have not that intimate connection with Scotland which it is necessary Scotch Representatives should have. All I can say is, that if there happen to be only six Conservative Members from Scotland, one of whom must be a Cabinet Minister, we open the door much more easily than ever before for entry into that highly respectable body. But, seriously, the people of Scotland are looking to Parliament to make something of this Bill, and they really do want the best man who can be found, whether he is the Duke of Argyll, the Earl of Rosebery, or anybody else, for the Office. We must remember that the holder of the Office will not be merely a Departmental Chief; but, as a Cabinet Minister, he will be much more than that, and will have to take his fair share and have his due weight in the general administration of Imperial affairs. When once we get a man in the Cabinet, we must not regard his position merely with reference to the Department of which he is the head; because he is one of the Government, the Body who have to decide the great Imperial questions of the day. To limit the number of persons from whom that individual is to be drawn would be a fatal mistake. I do not wish to maintain that it will not generally be very desirable to have the Scottish Minister in the House of Commons; but that is a matter which should be left in the hands of the Ministry of the day to decide. The Home Secretary, who is at present Home Secretary for Scotland as well as England, is almost always in this House; but there is no Act of Parliament which makes it compulsory that he should be a Member of this House. I think the Office of Secretary for Scotland should be left in the same position as that of Home Secretary. I have made a longer speech than I intended; I have been tempted to do so because of the exclusive and narrowing character of the Amendment.

Mr. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.): The hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Roxburgh (Mr. A. R. D. Elliot) has entirely omitted to call the attention of the Committee to the merits of the case. Formerly, when we had only the Lord Advocate representing Scottish interests in the House of Commons there was one great guarantee for attention to Scottish affairs, and that was that the Lord Advocate was necessarily a Member of the House of Commons. The drawbacks to the position of the Lord Advocate were two-fold. In the first place, he being a lawyer, there were a great many administrative functions with which he was not particularly well qualified to deal. We certainly had the advantage of always being able to communicate with the Gentleman who was responsible for the conduct of the affairs of Scotland. A Secretary for Scotland was appointed. Now, I maintain that by appointing as Secretary for Scotland a Member of the other House the Government have destroyed the whole advantage which we expected to derive from the appointment. The hon. and learned Member for Roxburgh says we ought to get the best man. I agree with him in that; but whatever qualifications a Peer may have, he has this vital disqualification—that he is not in this House, and is totally inaccessible, absolutely unknown to many, and perfectly useless for the purposes of his Office. I have desired on many occasions to gain access to the noble Marquess the Secretary for Scotland (the Marquess of Lothian), but have not been able to find him. I cannot afford the time to kick my heels in the purlieus of the other House. There may be gentlemen with great leisure who can succeed in disinterring the Secretary for Scotland; but I have never seen him. I submit it is impossible that the Business of Scotland can be attended to with any degree of justice and fulness unless Members of this House have constant access, and daily access if necessary, to the Secretary for Scotland. Whatever qualifications a Peer may have he is subjected to a fatal disqualification, and that is that he cannot transact the Business of the Office properly. I dare say the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) will reply; but I cannot recognize him as an impartial critic. He occupies a somewhat invidious position. He has his own proper duties to attend to, and, in addition, he is the conduit pipe by which are communicated to this House the opinions of the Scottish Secretary. From my experience while Lord Dalhousie was Secretary for Scotland, I have determined—in season and out of season, whether under Liberal or Conservative Governments—to oppose the appointment as Secretary for Scotland of a Gentleman sitting in the other House. It is said that we cave in to the Government; but that is exactly what we do not do, as there are many motives which influence Governments, such as the desire to find a suitable place for Members of their own Party. We cannot go far wrong if we appoint a Member of this House. In my opinion, unless this Amendment is accepted, all the other provisions are illusory; and, in fact, Scottish Members are now in a worse position than they were before a Secretary for Scotland was appointed.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): We have had a very important but nevertheless rather academic discussion, because there is no Officer of State who is compelled by law to be a Member of this House. I am afraid that if we continue the discussion very long we may crowd out other and more practical Amendments. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] Well, I do not think the Amendment can be carried, and I hope my hon. Friend the Member for East Edinburgh (Mr. Wallace) will not press it to a Division. While saying this, I entirely disclaim the sentiments of the hon. and learned Member for Roxburgh (Mr. A. R. D. Elliot), because upon the principle of the matter I entirely agree with the hon. Member for North Aberdeen (Mr. Hunter). The real question is—What is best for the convenience of the Public Service? The Secretary for Scotland is the Home Secretary, and I put it to the Committee whether it is not now an established practice that the Home Secretary must be in this House? I, therefore, press upon the Government the propriety of the Secretary for Scotland being also a Member of this House.

Mr. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee): In the very clever speech of the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Roxburgh (Mr. A. R. D. Elliot) there was one great defect, and that was that he seemed to totally misconceive the nature and object aimed at by the Amendment, because the main objection of the hon. and learned Gentleman was that this was a limiting Amendment, and it prevented us getting the very best man for the Office, inasmuch as when the Conservative Government may be in power we should be limited in choice to half-a-dozen Members, which is, on the average, the number of the Scotch Conservative contingent in this House. I do not suppose for a moment my hon. Friend the Member for East Edinburgh (Mr. Wallace) means anything of that sort. He does not mean that the appointment to the Office of Scotch Secretary should be confined to Scotch Members of Parliament. All the limitation that we desire to see is that the Office should be confined to persons who are either Members of this House or eligible to become Members of this House. The present holder of the Office, for instance, is not eligible to be a Member of this House, and it is against that state of things we desire to guard. I think my hon. Friend (Mr. Wallace) might have done better if he had omitted the controversial matter which is contained in the latter part of the Amendment—namely, that if a Member of this House is appointed Secretary for Scotland he shall not be compelled to seek re-election. If he had omitted that, and confined himself to proposing that the person who is selected by the Government to be the Secretary for Scotland shall be a man who can have a seat in this House, his Amendment would have excluded the Peerage, and would have had the indirect effect of requiring the Scotch Secretary to be a Member of this House. I was rather surprised to notice the attitude assumed upon this question by my hon. Friend the Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir George Campbell). My hon. Friend said that in no other case is the holder of a great Office of State limited by law to Members of the House of Commons. I admit the fact, but I deny the argument.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL: I did not deny the expediency of the Secretary for Scotland being a Member of this House.

Mr. E. ROBERTSON: I understood my hon. Friend made a point of the fact. Now, I think that the principle embodied in the Amendment ought to be applied to all other Members of the Ministry—that is to say, that in all cases where there is only one Representative of an Office he should be seated in this House. If there are two Representatives of any great State Office, then the principal of the two should be seated in this House, relegating the inferior Representative to the House of Lords. If anybody proposes to carry out that principle, either directly, as my hon. Friend the Member for East Edinburgh (Mr. Wallace) does by his Amendment, or indirectly, by refusing Supplies in all cases in which the rule is transgressed, I shall be ready to vote with him. I have consulted already with my hon. Friend as to the form of his Amendment, and I think it would be in some respects less objectionable to many if he will leave out that portion which raises the question of re-election on appointment, and will simply confine himself to the assertion that the Secretary for Scotland shall always be a person having a seat in this House, or who is eligible for a seat in this House.

Mr. DONALD CRAWFORD (Lanark, N.E.:) I think it important that the vote which many hon. Members on this side of the House will be compelled to give, in the event of the Division, should not be misunderstood. I am as strongly of opinion as my hon. Friend the Member for East Edinburgh (Mr. Wallace) that the Secretary for Scotland should have a seat in this House. I was not always so strongly of that opinion; but, notwithstanding the admirable manner in which the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate performs his duties in this House, his position is a peculiar one. He is not, and does not profess to be, the Representative or *alter ego* of the Secretary for Scotland; and I must say that great inconvenience arises, and must arise, so long as the Secretary for Scotland himself has not a seat in the House of Commons. Four-fifths, perhaps nine-tenths, of the duties of the Secretary for Scotland correspond with the duties of the Home Secretary, who always has a seat in this House; and that, I think, is an argument in favour of our contention which it is very difficult to get over. I wish to point out, however, that in order to attain the desirable and practical object which ought to be brought about in every case by the force of public opinion in Scotland and in this House my hon. Friend proposes to make two most extreme Constitutional changes in this Bill. One is to disqualify Members of the House of Lords from holding the particular high Office of State such as this is. It is a very serious question whether for the practical convenience of Scotland, by a side wind, in an Amending Bill such as this, we are entitled to make such a change. I think not. We may all have our ideas about the functions of the House of Lords, and we may have many reforms in our heads; but I do not think this is the way to carry them out. The second Constitutional change is that for the practical convenience of Scotland it is proposed that a Constitutional rule should be departed from, and that a man who receives an Office of profit under the Crown is no longer to go back to his constituents for re-election. This rule may require modification; but I maintain that it would be highly improper for us, in this casual, incidental, way to alter it. I do not think it is a claim that Scottish Members are entitled to make on the House of Commons. Therefore, while I think it is desirable—and I hope the Government will take note that that is the opinion of the Scottish Members—that the Secretary for Scotland should sit in this House, I am unable to vote for the Amendment.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): I support the Amendment of the hon. Member for East Edinburgh (Mr. Wallace), and I hope that on practical grounds he will press it to a Division. I support it also because, if it is carried, other Constitutional changes will be required. Possibly the first result will be to enfranchise the Scottish Peers, and place them in the same position as Irish Peers, who are eligible to sit in either House. The present disqualification of Scottish Peers ought not to exist. At present the Liberal Scottish Peer has no chance of being elected to the other House, and he could not be elected to the House of Commons. Then we will require to bring about some reforms in the other House, which are so much desired. If we cannot have the Scottish Secretary in this House, we ought to have an arrangement by which Secretaries of State shall have a right to take part in the Business in both Houses. I trust we shall have a Division on this question, and that the principle will be established that the Secretary for Scotland shall be a Member of the House of Commons.

Mr. FINLAY (Inverness, &c.): I quite agree with hon. Members as to the desirableness of having the Secretary for Scotland in this House. I think the very same reasons that render it desirable that the Home Secretary should be in this House render it desirable that the Scotch Secretary should be in this House; but I am unable to vote for the Amendment. I am not prevented from voting for the Amendment merely by the fact that, so far as I believe, there is no precedent for an enactment fettering the discretion of the Crown in this way, as to the class of persons upon whom a particular appointment shall be conferred. But that reason does weigh with me very much. Although it is, no doubt, most desirable that the Secretary for Scotland should be a Member of this House, accessible to Members of this House—as only a Member of this House can be—yet there may be Peers with qualifications so exceptional as to render it desirable that in their case that which should be a general rule should be departed from; and that consideration has all the more weight if, as we all hope, the Secretary for Scotland is to be in the future a Member of the Cabinet. I think it would be very undesirable, if the Secretary for Scotland is to be a Member of the Cabinet, that we should fetter the discretion of the Crown as to the class of person from whom the Secretary for Scotland is to be selected. While maintaining these views, I hope my hon. Friend the Member for East Edinburgh (Mr. Wallace) will not press his Amendment to a Division, and for this very practical reason—that he will get a Division which will convey an altogether erroneous impression as to the feeling amongst Scottish Members. A great many Members who, like myself, think it desirable that the Scottish Secretary should be in this House, will feel constrained to vote against the Amendment; and if my hon. Friend presses it to a Division he will be weakening the cause he has at heart.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY OF LANCASTER (Lord JOHN MANNERS) (Leicestershire, E.): It is not correct to say that there is no precedent for statutory limitation as to the House in which a particular high Officer of State shall sit. There is a certain precedent, and I think it is well the Committee should have its attention called to the fact. When I first came into Parliament the Postmaster General was, by Statute, obliged to be a Peer of the Realm, and, of course, could not sit in this House. That was felt to be an unwise and inexpedient regulation, and some years ago that statutory disqualification of a Member of the House of Commons was repealed, with considerable advantage to the Public Service. Are we now, in the year 1887, to adopt that bad precedent of a former generation, and enact a statutory disqualification of all persons who do not happen to belong to one Estate of the Realm? I cannot imagine so undemocratic a proceeding as that suggested by the hon. Member for East Edinburgh (Mr. Wallace). Surely the democratic principle on all these subjects is to give the widest possible choice in the selection of the fittest person to fill an office. The hon. Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark) suggested that the Amendment ought to be supported, because there are various disqualifications now affecting the Scottish Peerage, which he wishes to see abolished. But that is the oddest reason I ever heard for imposing a fresh disqualification on Peers of the Realm. There is one other suggestion which the Committee should take into consideration, and that is that if the Amendment is carried Scottish Peers will be prevented from filling the most important Scottish Office, while it will be open to any Irish Peer, who is not an elected Peer, to fill that particular Office. This seems to me a very extraordinary proposal to be suggested to us from what is called the democratic aspect of the question. I sincerely hope the Committee will not accept the Amendment.

MR. WALLACE: I only wish to say a word in reply to the observations which have been made upon my Amendment. My hon. and learned Friend the Member for Dundee (Mr. E. Robertson) has suggested another way of putting the Amendment I have proposed. His suggestion is to the effect that the Amendment shall be confined to persons who are eligible as Members for the House of Commons. That is one of the forms I myself discarded, as being irreconcilable with the main proposition which I desire should be adopted. I do not merely want that the Secretary for Scotland should not be in the House of Lords, but I want him to be positively in the House of Commons. Supposing he gets re-elected by some constituency and comes to the House of Commons, my Amendment will operate. At present he has to vacate his seat, because he holds an appointment of profit. I want to prevent the whole thing running round, as it were, in a circle. I want to prevent the Secretary for Scotland being obliged to be continually vacating his seat, as I am afraid he will have to do unless some such Amendment as I propose is adopted. I gather from the fact that my hon. and learned Friend (Mr. E. Robertson) has not proposed a formal Amendment to my Amendment that he does not mean to desert me in the event of my pressing this Amendment to a Division. I am not insensible of the importance of some of the criticisms which have been passed upon the Amendment; but, taking all the criticisms together, I am perfectly prepared to go before the general public, particularly of Scotland, with an Amendment of this kind, because I know that it will be viewed in a very different light from that in which it is seen from many points of the compass in this House.

MR. E. ROBERTSON: I certainly do not intend to desert my hon. Friend (Mr. Wallace) if he goes to a Division; indeed, I may remind him of the fact that the form in which he has submitted his Amendment to the House is the form suggested by me to him. I think the other form I have sketched is preferable; but I shall certainly support him if he goes to a Division.

Question put.

The Committee *divided:* —Ayes 46; Noes 105: Majority 59.—(Div. List, No. 419.) [4.35 P.M.]

MR. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox): I beg to propose to insert, at the end of line 26—

> "Who shall henceforth have the state and position of one of Her Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State with the title of Secretary of State for Scotland."

As I am very anxious to see this Bill passed through Committee, I shall detain the House but a very few moments. I think we are all agreed upon this—that whilst there is not to be any limitation to the effect that the Secretary for Scotland should necessarily be a Member of the House of Commons, the Secretary for Scotland ought to be of Cabinet rank. The subjects with which he will have to deal and the importance of the Office are such that necessarily require that he shall be of Cabinet rank. Now, if we confer upon him the position of Secretary of State for Scotland, we necessarily, according to usage, confer upon him the state of Cabinet rank. It seems rather strange that the Secretary for Scotland should be called simply the Secretary for Scotland, and there is no reason why he should not be given the title of Secretary of State for Scotland, to prevent anything in the nature of confusion. It has been objected in some quarters that the giving of that title would necessitate the raising of the salary; but I do not think that is at all involved. The Scotch Members, as a rule, do not go in for extravagance in salaries; and whatever the office may be—even when it is only a medical officer in a prison—you will find that the salaries paid in Scotland are greatly inferior to those paid in England. That is admitted without question by us, and I cannot suppose for a moment that, supposing it were the case that the Secretary for Scotland should occupy the position of a Secretary of State for Scotland, the Scotch Members would necessarily think that he should have a salary equivalent to that given to the other principal Secretaries of State. Without detaining the House further, I beg to move my Amendment.

Amendment proposed,

> In page 1, line 26, at end, to insert the words, "who shall henceforth have the status and position of one of Her Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State with the title of Secretary of State for Scotland."—(*Mr. Caldwell.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I fully appreciate the motive and desire of the hon. Gentleman who has just addressed the Committee, and who has moved this Amendment to the Bill. But, Sir, I would just point out to him that it is not a usual course to take to introduce into a Bill of this kind an Amendment to create a principal Secretary of State to Her Majesty. It would be exceedingly undesirable that this Amendment should be made. I do not wish in the slightest degree to undervalue the very great importance of the duties to be discharged by the Secretary for Scotland. It may be—and I have no doubt it will be—the case, almost uniformly, that the Secretary for Scotland will be a Member of the Cabinet;

but to lay down by Act of Parliament that he must be a Secretary of State is to lay down a proposition which is at least unusual, and, I venture to think, undesirable. I desire, Sir, again to say that we regard this Office as an Office of great importance and of great value; but it is more desirable that the Office should grow by its own usefulness and by its own influence and power, than that it should be at once created, as the hon. Gentleman wishes to create it, one of the six principal Offices of State. There are, I think, constitutional objections to the course proposed, and therefore I trust the hon. Gentleman will not think it necessary to persevere with this Motion, and that the Committee will not accept it. The Government are quite convinced of the importance of the Office, and we do look forward to the prospect that in all probability, as a rule, the Secretary for Scotland will have a high position in the Councils of Her Majesty.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I am exceedingly glad to hear the declaration which has just been made by the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury, that, as a rule—almost invariably, I suppose—the Secretary for Scotland will be a Member of the Cabinet. I understand the right hon. Gentleman to say that generally, at all events, that will be the case. Now, that is a very satisfactory declaration, and certainly gets rid of a great deal of the difficulty. At the same time, I do not think it is a complete answer to the suggestion that the Secretary for Scotland should be a Secretary of State, When there was a Secretary for Scotland in the last century he was a Secretary of State. But I am not going to press this matter; because I am afraid that, by asking too much, we might end by not getting anything at all. If I thought the Amendment of the hon. Member for the St. Rollox Division of Glasgow (Mr. Caldwell) would carry out the object we have in view, and that there was any chance of its being passed, I should certainly vote for it. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers), who is a great authority on such matters, has expressed himself on a previous occasion very strongly in favour of making the Secretary for Scotland a Secretary of State, and I know he was very anxious to put an Amendment into shape which would have that object. As I see him present in the House now, and, as he is a Scotch Member, I hope he will let us know whether he thinks this Amendment possible or practicable, or whether he can suggest anything better himself.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): If the Government are not going to give way on this question, I do not think the Bill is worth having at all. You may be able by your majority to overwhelm Scotch opinion, for all the Scotch Members—Liberal Unionists and all others—are at one on this question—you may be able, I say, by a small majority, to reject this Amendment; but it means practically the rejection of the Bill altogether; for, in that case, the Bill would not be worth having, and we had better go back at once to the old conditions under which we had a Scotch Lord of the Treasury and a Lord Advocate to carry out Scotch Business. At the present time we hardly know where we are, or what we are doing. The noble Marquess the present Secretary for Scotland (the Marquess of Lothian), through the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate, asked the Scotch Members, not long ago, to meet in order to consider a certain question. We accordingly met for that purpose, and after our meeting was over, the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury, in reply to a Question put to him in the House, gave a decision on the very point which the Secretary for Scotland had asked the Scotch Members to consider at the meeting. As a matter of fact, we had only met to discuss a question, which, without our knowing it, had been previously decided by the Cabinet. It is evident, therefore, that the Secretary for Scotland does not know what is taking place inside the Cabinet. We were called together to show what was Scotch opinion on a particular point, and the Cabinet, at another meeting, had decided that very question before we met that day. I do not know whether the Government meant on that question to disregard Scotch opinion. Some hon. Gentlemen have urged us not to press this Amendment; but if we are not to have any Amendments at all in this direction, the sooner we make an end to the Bill the better.

MR. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.): I spoke at great length on this subject on the second reading of the Bill, and endeavoured to explain what were the difficulties of the arrangements as proposed by the Government, and especially what were the difficulties with respect to the particular powers of a Secretary of State which it was intended to retain, and with respect to those which it was intended to dispense with. I pointed out how absolutely impossible it was, with any prospect of completeness, to follow the exact provisions of the present Bill. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) followed me on that occasion, and he practically assisted my case, but he said it would be a matter for the future consideration of the Government; and I am bound to say, after well considering what he said, that it would be much better if no such Motion as this were brought forward now. It would be much better if the Home Secretary, and the Lord Advocate, and the Prime Minister, and the Leader of the House were to well consider the extreme difficulties of the devolution of Business under this Bill, and that we should not adopt an Amendment to the measure which would require a certain number of consequential Amendments, many of which I pointed out the other day. On this ground, I would ask the hon. Gentleman the Member for the St. Rollox Division of Glasgow (Mr. Caldwell) not to press this Amendment, but to leave the matter to the Government, relying on the promise made by the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary, the other day, to consider what the difficulties are, and leave it to be dealt with in another Session. We do not wish to add to the difficulties of the Government upon that question.

MR. CALDWELL: I think, after what has been stated, that this matter can be re-considered on Report, and, therefore, I will withdraw my Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

On the Motion of THE LORD ADVOCATE, the following Amendment made:—In page 2, at end, add—

"All the powers and duties vested in or imposed on the Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury under 'The Valuation of Land (Scotland) Act, 1854,' shall be transferred to, vested in, and imposed on the Secretary for Scotland.

"All the powers and duties vested in or imposed upon the Board of Trade relating to Provisional Orders dealing with any of the subjects transferred to the Fishery Board, Scotland, by section eleven of 'The Sea Fisheries (Scotland) Amendment Act, 1885,' shall be transferred to, vested in, and imposed upon the Secretary for Scotland."

GENERAL SIR GEORGE BALFOUR (Kincardine), in moving the insertion of the following Amendment:—In page 2, at end, to add these words—

"All duties appertaining to the preparation of Bills, as well as those of the Crown Agent and of the Legal Secretary, together with all expenses connected with the said duties, as well as other financial arrangements and establishments, shall be carried on under the Secretary for Scotland,"

was understood to say that some of the duties provided for by the Amendment were at present performed by the Lord Advocate; but the Lord Advocate had far more important duties to perform; and it would be far more dignified if he were relieved from those of which the Amendment would relieve him.

Amendment proposed,

In page 2, at end, add—"All duties appertaining to the preparation of Bills, as well as those of the Crown Agent and of the Legal Secretary, together with all expenses connected with the said duties as well as other financial arrangements and establishments, shall be carried on under the Secretary for Scotland."—(*General Sir George Balfour.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): I am afraid I cannot assent to this Amendment. My hon. and gallant Friend says he moves this Amendment in order to add to the dignity of my Office, and he thereby reminds me of the old and well known lines—

"It is all very well to dissemble your love,
But why did you kick me downstairs?"

It is proposed to turn the Lord Advocate out of this House and send him down to Scotland a mere legal officer. I cannot assent to that; I prefer to remain here a little longer. Although the Lord Advocate sometimes does make mistakes in regard to Bills, I think he is a very suitable officer to attend to the drafting of Bills for Scotland. If this Amendment were passed it would be necessary to have a new official for the purpose of drafting Scotch Bills, and I do not see how the change would make the Lord Advocate's Office more efficient. It would be highly inconvenient to make the change proposed by the Amendment, and therefore I hope it will not be pressed.

GENERAL SIR GEORGE BALFOUR was understood to say that he had only brought forward the Amendment from a conviction that it would be useful. As to the drafting of Bills, it was not done in Ireland under the Attorney General for Ireland, but was entirely under the Treasury; and he did not see why in Scotland it should be done by the Lord Advocate. The Crown Agent, too, had nothing whatever to do with the Lord Advocate, and ought not to be under him. As to drafting, no less than £800 had been paid by the country for the purpose; but he did not believe that two-thirds of it was expended in that way—it was applied to a different purpose from that for which Parliament voted it. If he were Lord Advocate he would certainly not desire to be made into a mere mouthpiece for other people. As to the honour of sitting here in Parliament, he thought the Lord Advocate might be better occupied in attending to his important duties elsewhere. However, he (Sir George Balfour) begged to be allowed to withdraw his Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Clause 2, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

MR. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.): Before the 2nd clause is disposed of I wish to ask a question as to its effect. My point is this—that under the present state of things a register is kept at the Home Office of all commissions and appointments made in Scotland, which the Queen, in point of form, is advised to make by the Home Secretary. Now, that is a very important part of the Secretary of State's business. In the same way, all appointments and commissions in connection with the Army are recorded and registered in the War Office, and the Queen's pleasure is taken on them by the Secretary for War. The same thing is done in regard to Colonial commissions and appointments by the Colonial Secretary. This recording of all these appointments, and taking the Queen's pleasure about them, is a very important branch of the Secretary of State's duties. What I want to understand is whether the Queen's pleasure will be taken in future as to Scotch appointments, and the record kept, not at the Home Office, but at the Scotch Office. It is a question on which, in past times, I am aware, there has been some friction, and therefore it is very important that there should be no mistake about it now. I want to know whether, by this 2nd clause, this business will be turned over from the Home Secretary to the Secretary for Scotland? It is not one of the exceptional businesses in the 3rd clause, and therefore it looks as though it were intended to be transferred to the Secretary for Scotland. I should be glad to know whether that is the intention of the Government? If not, some words should be introduced in the next clause.

MR. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.): The subject I wish to refer to relates particularly to the 2nd paragraph of the clause. We are now imposing very much larger duties on the Secretary for Scotland, especially in regard to the preparation of Reports and Returns. Under the original Act, a sufficient clerical staff has not been provided for the performance of these extra duties. In the Bill creating the Local Government Board there was a clause providing for the employment of an adequate staff; but nothing of the kind was introduced into the Scotch Act, and I trust the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate and the Government will see to it, that as these large extra duties are to be transferred, an adequate staff shall also be transferred to the Scotch Office for the preparation of these Reports from time to time.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): In answer to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers), I may say that I should myself conceive that, inasmuch as the functions he speaks of are not excepted, the whole of that system of registration would be transferred. Whether all these commissions and appointments would be registered in the Scotch Office is more than I am able to say off-hand. But the Secretary for Scotland will, I conceive, make the appointments and they will be registered, and he will notify them to Her Majesty, or, rather, submit them to Her Majesty for approval. But I feel unable to answer the question completely off-hand, and I can only say that I will make inquiries and find out how the matter stands. But these are matters which hardly require mentioning in the Statute. The business is transferred by the Statute; but I should have thought the form was a matter of arrangement between the two Departments. There is another point which I am not quite able to solve—namely, whether the exception of the Prerogative of mercy will leave it still with the Home Secretary to grant all licences or tickets-of-leave to prisoners undergoing sentences of penal servitude. The ordinary licences are given under certain rules which depend upon the number of good marks obtained and so forth, for convicts are invariably let out before the actual lapse of the whole number of years to which they have been sentenced.

Mr. CHILDERS: That was one of the points to which I called attention on the second reading of the Bill. I was quite satisfied that the whole question would be carefully considered before the Report is taken. The keeping of these registers to which I have referred has always hitherto been considered a function of the Secretary of State.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): It makes all the difference whether the Secretary for Scotland is a great Officer of State, or subordinate to the Home Secretary.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Clause 3 (Exceptions).

Mr. DONALD CRAWFORD (Lanark, N.E.) moved the omission of Sub-section (1)—"In advising Her Majesty as to the exercise of the prerogative of mercy."

Amendment proposed, "To leave out Sub-section (1)."—(*Mr. Donald Crawford.*)

Question, "That the words proposed be there left out," put, and *agreed to.*

Mr. DONALD CRAWFORD: I wish now to move the omission of the second sub-section of the clause, which gives the Home Secretary power to administer in Scotland the Factory and Workshops Act, the Coal Mines Regulation Act, the Metalliferous Mines Regulation Act, the Explosives Act, the Cruelty to Animals Act, and the Reformatory and Industrial Schools Acts. This is an Amendment which I hope the Government will agree to. I am sure that the Government and hon. Members on this side of the House are at one in the spirit in which they approach this measure. They desire, in the first place, to avoid the friction which, by the admission of the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary (Mr. Matthews), is going on in the transaction of the business between the Scotch Office and the Home Office, and I believe that the Government also desire—together with the Scotch Members on this side of the House—that the importance of the Office of the Secretary for Scotland shall be enhanced. I believe their desire is that this Minister shall have some considerable weight in Council with the Queen, and some satisfaction given to him. Now, Sir, in order to attain that object it is really very desirable that as few subjects as possible shall be excepted from those general powers of the Home Office which are handed over to the Secretary for Scotland, and I think, without making a speech, that I shall be able to show very briefly that there is really no substantial justification for not handing over to the Secretary for Scotland the Factory Acts, the Coal Mines and Explosives Acts, and the Reformatory and Industrial Schools Acts. I would remind the Committee that the principal Act of 1885 transferred to the Secretary for Scotland the administration of a large number of Acts of Parliament by Schedule. Among them were such subjects as prisons and lunacy. I could enumerate a great many more; but I confine myself for the moment to those two. Now, Sir, I think a very plausible argument might have been urged to show that the administration of prisons in a country should be uniform, and should be centralized under one head and one Minister. But the contrary principle has been followed—namely, that it was desirable, as far as possible, to leave the Minister for Scotland to manage the prisons of Scotland. That was the principle which prevailed when the Act of 1885 was passed, and, accordingly, we Scotch do manage our own prisons, and administer our own Lunacy Acts. There is much that might be said for the administration of lunatics under one head; yet the principle was not applied in 1885. There are many other Acts to which the same remark would apply. Take, for example, the Reformatory and Industrial Schools Acts. That is partly a criminal matter and a matter of prison discipline, and partly a matter of education; yet the two Departments have been, to a certain extent, separately treated, especially in Scotland. Now, we have a different Criminal Law—an entirely different system, differently administered; and we also, at this moment, have our prisons and education under separate management. Can any reason be assigned—I doubt whether any statable reason can be assigned—why the reformatory and industrial schools of Scotland should be placed under the Home Secretary? I would say just as much for the Factory and Workshops Act of 1878, and for the Mines Acts. It is, no doubt, very desirable that mines and factories should be conducted upon settled principles; but I ask again, if we are able, without any inconvenience, to manage our prisons upon our own principles, and our lunatics upon our own principles, and our elementary schools, upon which so much money is spent, all upon our own principles, can we not manage our factories and our mines? I submit to the Committee that there has been no substantial reason shown why these subjects should be transferred. We should not lose sight of the important fact that if you do away with the exceptions contained in this clause, you, by one stroke, make the Minister for Scotland a different person altogether. You remove the stigma, so to speak, of subordination, which makes him only a delegate, as it were, of the Home Secretary on certain subjects, the root of those subjects still remaining with the Home Secretary. If you make a clean sweep, and transfer all the duties of the Home Secretary in Scotland to the Secretary for Scotland, you will attain, to a very large extent, the object we have all at heart. I do submit earnestly that there is no reason why these exceptions should be made. If there were, I would gladly give way; but I defy anyone to point out why these subjects should be treated in a different manner. I hope my Amendment will be accepted by the Committee.

Amendment proposed, "That Sub-section (2) be omitted from the Clause."—(*Mr. Donald Crawford.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Bill."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): I must confess I am a little surprised at the view which is taken by my hon. and learned Friend. If I thought that the exceptions we have made amounted only to what he has stated, I should certainly agree with him that they ought to be struck out. But I do not hold that view. As to prisons and lunatics in Scotland and education, we have already established Departments for dealing with those individual matters in Scotland. There is a Lunacy Board in Edinburgh and a Prison Board in Edinburgh, and the prisons are administered by one Commission, and the lunatics by another. As to Scotch education, there is a separate Scotch Education Department, with a separate staff. But there are two reasons why these particular subjects mentioned in the clause are not analogous. In the first place, they relate to the preservation of life and limb, and it is absolutely indispensable that the administration and control of such matters should be in one hand, in order that all the work for saving life and limb may be effectually carried out, and that there may be no conflict in the matter between different authorities. If you had a separate Department in Scotland for dealing with mines, and another for dealing with factories, with no Central Board, you would have most dangerous results. All the rules and regulations of one country might be contrary to the rules and regulations of the other, and the most disastrous results might follow. Miners passing from the one country to the other might carry with them habits perfectly safe according to the pit arrangements in their own country, but most dangerous in the other. Another strong objection is the financial one. There is a particular Department in the Home Office, and a very important Department, for the working of the law in connection with these particular subjects. That Department would have to be broken up to some extent, for it would be quite impossible for the Secretary for Scotland to carry out the work of mines and explosives, and so on, in Scotland without having his own staff under him. That would lead to friction and difficulty, and would cause a considerable amount of additional expense. It would be impossible to work it under present circumstances. At all events, it would not be advisable that these matters should be placed under two separate individuals and separate management. I must therefore oppose this Amendment.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): I feel that there is some force in what the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate has said about the first of these Acts; but he has not said anything about the others. The case of the Factories and Mines Acts is one thing; but the case of the Reformatory and Industrial Schools Acts is quite another. I should have thought it would have been a great advantage to have these latter under the Scotch Education Department, and that it would be more likely to facilitate the beneficial working of the Acts if they were transferred to the Scotch Office. With regard to the Vivisection Act, I should like to ask my hon. and learned Friend (Mr. Donald Crawford) whether he does not feel that there is an objection to removing that from the Home Secretary? I should have thought there would be a great advantage in having the Vivisection Act administered by the same Office throughout the United Kingdom, for in an eminent degree it requires uniformity of operation in all three countries. But as to the Industrial Schools Acts, I believe my hon. and learned Friend to be entirely in the right, and I do not understand the Government to make any reply to him.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. STUART-WORTLEY) (Sheffield, Hallam): The Committee must remember that the local administration of the Industrial Schools Acts may become a race for public money. It is desirable that the conditions under which children are thrown in part on the Public Treasury for support, maintenance, and education, should be based on uniform principles throughout Great Britain. It is true that the reformatory and industrial schools of Ireland are under separate management; but in Scotland where, speaking from experience, I can say that considerable difference of view as to the working of the Acts prevails among the magisterial authorities, I should be very unwilling myself to surrender the power.

MR. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.): The argument adduced by the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for the Home Department against transferring the Industrial Schools Acts is really an argument in favour of transferring them. He first contends that the working of the Acts had better come from one authority than from two, and that is exactly the old argument which was used when we urged the transference of Scotch education under the previous Bill. But the second argument of the hon. Member is that, as a matter of fact, the magisterial discretion is different in Scotland from what it is in England, so that you have a different administration there from what you have here. For that very reason I am in favour of a transference of administration. The subject has to do with prisons and with education, and both those subjects have already been transferred to Scotland. The noble Marquess the present Secretary for Scotland (the Marquess of Lothian) has himself stated in the Lords that he himself was in favour of the transference of these Industrial Schools Acts, and only gave way because of the prospect of further legislation in regard to reformatory and industrial schools.

MR. STUART-WORTLEY: The hon. Member for South Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce) has recommended that the working of the Industrial Schools Acts should be placed under the Secretary for Scotland in connection with the Education Department. But may I remind him that the Commissioners were careful to recommend that they should be kept as far as possible out of the jurisdiction of that Department?

MR. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.): I am anxious to assist the House in coming to a conclusion before it is too late, and I would venture to recommend a compromise on these points. I would propose to the Committee that those powers which are exercised by the Home Office in Ireland as well as in England should also be exercised by the Home Office in Scotland, so as to preserve uniformity; but those powers which are administered by the Lord Lieutenant in Ireland should be administered in Scotland by the Secretary for Scotland. Under that arrangement, coal mines and factories would continue to be adminis- by the Home Office. I am not sure about the Explosives Act; but, probably, by the Report we should be able to ascertain how that would be. But the Reformatory and Industrial Schools Acts undoubtedly ought to be administered by the Secretary for Scotland. As to the reason which has been advanced by the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for the Home Department (Mr. Stuart-Wortley)—namely, the absence of financial control which must follow, and that there would be an increase of expense, I should be the last man of this House to recommend a diminution of financial control; but I do not think that would occur. Therefore, I am of opinion that, considering that the prisons and education are so intimately connected with the reformatory and industrial schools, those schools should be transferred. I think if that view is accepted by the Committee, it will be a reasonable compromise.

MR. J. H. A. MACDONALD: I am not in a position at this moment to accept the suggestion; but I may say that further consideration shall be given to it so as to meet one of the most crucial and important matters that has arisen in connection with the Bill. Perhaps it may come on again upon Report.

MR. DONALD CRAWFORD: Looking to the period of the day which has now been reached (5.40), I am quite willing to withdraw my Amendment, and raise the question again on Report, although I am rather unwilling that we should not come to a decision upon it.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

On the Motion of The LORD ADVOCATE, Clause amended by the insertion of the following additional sub-section:—"(g.) The Naturalization Acts, 1870 and 1872."

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

On the Motion of The LORD ADVOCATE, the following New Clause was inserted after Clause 3:—

"This Act shall take effect on and after the first day of January one thousand eight hundred and eighty-eight."

MR. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee) moved the insertion of the following Clause:—

"That section eight of 'The Secretary for Scotland Act, 1885,' shall be amended so as to read as follows: the Secretary shall have the place, trust, and office of Keeper of Her Majesty's Seal, appointed by the Treaty of Union to be kept and made use of in Scotland in place of the Great Seal of Scotland, with all such powers, privileges, and liberties as do by Law and custom belong to the same: and it shall be lawful for the Secretary to affix the said Seal to certificates issued by him, relating to matters within his official cognizance, in any case in which he shall deem it expedient to do so."

New Clause (Secretary for Scotland may affix seal in certain cases,)—(*Mr. E. Robertson,*)—*brought up,* and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the said Clause be now read a second time."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): I cannot accept this clause.

MR. E. ROBERTSON: I am astonished that the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate refuses to accept this clause. He must know that there is considerable difficulty in determining how far the power of the Secretary for Scotland can be used; and the object of my clause is to remove a great deal of inconvenience and trouble under which Scotch companies and Scotch citizens doing business in the United States of America and elsewhere labour. All I want is that the Secretary for Scotland shall be allowed to fix the seal in all cases in which he has power to do so. There are many cases in which he has such power; and it would save a great deal of money and trouble to Scotch citizens and companies if he would exercise it.

MR. J. H. A. MACDONALD: It may have been my fault; but my attention was not drawn to the clause until to-day. I hope the hon. and learned Gentleman will withdraw it now.

MR. E. ROBERTSON: Certainly, on the understanding that the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate and the Government will approach it with an open mind.

MR. J. H. A. MACDONALD: Certainly.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Preamble *agreed to.*

Bill *reported;* as amended, to be considered upon *Friday,* and to be *printed.* [Bill 385.]

NOTICE OF MOTION.

IRISH NATIONAL LEAGUE (SPECIAL PROCLAMATION).

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): It may be convenient to the House, Sir, if I read out the words of the Address which I propose to move to-morrow. I shall move—

> "That a humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, humbly to represent to Her Majesty that there has been laid before this House a Special Proclamation of the Viceroy of Ireland, declaring the Association known as the Irish National League to be a dangerous Association under 'The Criminal Law Procedure (Ireland) Act, 1887;'
>
> "That no information has been furnished to Parliament to justify the issue of the said Special Proclamation, by virtue of which Her Majesty's subjects are liable to be punished as criminals without judicial inquiry into the nature of their acts;
>
> "And, that this House, in the absence of such information, prays that the said Proclamation shall not continue in force as to the Association named and described therein."

QUESTION.

DOMINION OF CANADA—EMPLOYMENT OF BRITISH IMPERIAL TROOPS.

Sir HENRY TYLER (Great Yarmouth) asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies a Question of which he had given him private Notice, Whether he had noticed the announcement in the evening papers of yesterday and in *The Times* and other papers of that morning, to the effect that Sir John Macdonald, the Premier of Canada, had stated that "the Canadian Government would apply for the services of British Regulars;" whether he had received any communication or information on that subject; and, whether the Premier of Canada was justified in threatening the use of British Imperial troops?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Sir Henry Holland) (Hampstead): I have seen in the newspapers the report of the statement alleged to have been made by Sir John Macdonald as to applying for the services of British Imperial troops; but I have received no information on the subject. I think it highly probable, indeed, I believe, that the report must convey a very erroneous impression of what was really said; but I have telegraphed to the Governor General for information on this point, and on the situation generally. I am not prepared to state that under no circumstances whatever would Her Majesty's troops be permitted to support the local forces of the Dominion; but I need hardly say that each case must be judged on its own merits.

MERCHANT SHIPPING—BURNING OF "THE CITY OF MONTREAL"—RECOVERY OF THE MISSING BOAT.

OBSERVATION.

The SECRETARY to the BOARD of TRADE (Baron Henry De Worms) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): In view of the anxiety displayed for the safety of the passengers in the missing boat of the *City of Montreal*, I am sure the House will be glad to hear that the Board of Trade have just received a telegram that the missing boat and the people on board were picked up on the 15th, and landed at Falmouth to-day.

House adjourned at ten minutes before Six o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, 25th August, 1887.

MINUTES.]—Select Committee — *Report* — Forestry [No. 240].

Public Bills — *First Reading* — Metropolitan Police * (242); Savings Banks and Government Annuities * (243); Sheriff of Lanarkshire * (244).

Second Reading—Conveyancing (Scotland) Acts Amendment (233); Open Spaces (Dublin) (213), *negatived;* Public Libraries (Scotland) Acts Amendment (238).

Committee—Trustee Savings Banks (221-215).

Report—Stannaries Act (1869) Amendment * (228).

Third Reading — Lieutenancy Clerks Allowances * (231); Public Works Loans (234), and *passed.*

CONVEYANCING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 233.)

(*The Marquess of Lothian.*)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

The SECRETARY for SCOTLAND (The Marquess of Lothian), in moving that the Bill be now read a second time said, he greatly regretted that the Bill had been introduced so late into their Lordships' House. It dealt with a question in which many of their Lordships were greatly interested, and involved technicalities of law which they should have a full opportunity of discussing. Many noble Lords who were now absent, he knew, would have attended had they been aware that the Bill would be proceeded with this Session. However, the measure had in another form been before their Lordships on a previous occasion. The subject was not altogether new, and he could shortly place before their Lordships reasons for giving a second reading to the Bill. Its principle had been approved unanimously by the other House of Parliament. The object of the Bill was to amend the Conveyancing Act of 1874. He might briefly explain the change effected in the law of Scotland by that Act. The system of feus which resulted from the old military system of feudality had existed for a very long period. Lands were held for a tenure which involved the rendering of certain military services, and in course of time these services were commuted for a money payment known as feu-duties, and money payments were taken from the tenants when the lands changed hands under the name of casualties. There were two different kinds of casualties—one was payable by the heir-at-law when he succeeded to lands, and generally amounted to double the annual feu-duty. That was called a relief. The other kind of casualty was paid by his successor, who was not the heir-at-law, but took by bequest, sale, or by any other way in which the lands held in feu were passed. In this latter case the casualty amounted to a much larger sum than that payable by the heir-at-law. It was generally equivalent to one year's rental of the lands held in feu. Their Lordships would see at once that this casualty payable by the "singular successor" was a very heavy burden on the land held in feu, and in order to avoid and escape the payment to the superior of this heavy burden, a system was devised which, by means of a legal fiction, enabled the singular successor to evade the payment of the composition. It was done in this way:—The singular successor was not entered directly as vassal of the superior, but the heir-at-law was by an agreement entered as the direct vassal, and consequently only double the amount of feu-duty came to the superior, instead of the year's rent of the land in question. It was a question how far purchasers availed themselves of this practice. By the Act of 1874 the system under which, by reason of the legal fiction to which he had referred, the heir-at-law was able to be interposed as between the singular successor and the superior became impossible, because by operation of the Statute the singular successor held directly of the superior, and therefore there was no possibility of the heir-at-law being interjected so as to enable the singular successor to pay only the smaller instead of the larger casualty. How far the Act of 1874 was intended to make this alteration had been a matter of discussion. Several law cases had been brought in consequence of the doubt cast upon the interpretation of the Statute, and one of these had been before their Lordships' House. Although eminent Scottish Judges differed in opinion on the interpretation, on appeal to their Lordships' House, the decision of the majority of the Scottish Judges was unanimously confirmed—namely, that it became impossible under the clause which this Bill proposed to amend that the heir-at-law should be interposed as between the superior and the singular successor. Although there was great difference of opinion on the subject, he was advised by the present Law Officers of the Crown in Scotland, and he was informed that it was also the opinion of the late Lord Advocate and the late Solicitor General for Scotland, that the effect of this Bill would be simply and solely to restore things to what they were previously to the passing of the Act of 1874. It would simply make now by Act of Parliament that legal which was done before by a legal fiction. He did not mean to say that there was an improper evasion of the law in that legal fiction; because it was recognized as justifiable after the very strong expression of opinion in the House of Commons, and after the view expressed by the present Law Officers of the Crown on the effect of this clause. Their Lordships would agree that they would by this measure do away with an undoubted hardship, and impose upon the vassal the same duties which had been exacted from him before. After the decision of their Lordships' House, there could be no doubt whatever of the effect of the Act of 1874, and he questioned very much whether those who passed the Act ever anticipated that such results would follow from its interpretation. With regard to the second clause of the Bill, there could be very little doubt of the desirability of passing it. Its object was that trustees should not be liable to the larger casualties which they might be called upon to pay as singular successors whilst they represented the heir-at-law. It was quite possible that trustees might be called upon to pay the larger casualties, simply because they were not the heir-at-law. The purpose of the clause was to do away with the possibility of an injustice of that kind. He trusted that their Lordships would give a second reading to the Bill.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª." —(*The Marquess of Lothian.*)

The Duke of ARGYLL said, he recognized the difficulty in which the Government had been placed by the conduct of Public Business in the House of Commons; but he could not help observing that a great number of Peers in Scotland and others interested in this Bill had no idea that it was to be proceeded with so late in the Session. Many noble Lords would otherwise have been present to discuss a measure which affected so large an amount of property. At the same time, he would be reluctant to oppose the second reading, not only having regard to the position of the Government, but to the fact that he agreed with his noble Friend opposite, in at least one-half of his speech. One of the main objects of the Bill it was most desirable to attain. The reform which it proposed to effect was one which he entirely approved of in one respect—that was, the removal of the trustees of an estate from the position of being accounted, by a mere technicality, singular successors in the estate. That was provided for in Clause 2; but he was compelled to say that he thought the 1st clause was open to the most serious objections in point of public principle, and that it would inflict very great hardship on the proprietors of the land in Scotland. He regretted that it was necessary for him to go back a great way. It was impossible to treat these rights of property without going back to their history and origin. The Secretary for Scotland had touched on the question of the feudal law. There were a great many persons in England who thought it was sufficient to condemn anything to say that it was feudal; but in Scotland the word "feudal" had no such public prejudice against it. On the contrary, feudal tenures in the modern form were the popular tenures. They were very unlikely in Scotland to have any of the difficulties with which they were threatened in England about the enfranchisement of leaseholders. Most Scotsmen refused to build at all, except on feus which were a perpetual tenure, and feus were popular investments. Trustees continually invested in them, and the property of minors and the funds of widows and children were put into feus. A great many of the burghs of Scotland were proprietors of feus, and a great deal of their income depended on feus and on the casualties arising therefrom. This Bill therefore dealt with a most important subject and with a vast amount of property, touching, as it did, the funds of minors, widows, children, and public corporations, who were all concerned in the present state of the Feudal Law of the country. He ventured, therefore, to say, that if there was any part of this Bill which was not contentious it would be well to proceed with that during the present Session, and to delay the contentious part of the question to a future occasion. He wanted to point out to their Lordships some important objections to the first part of this Bill. In modern times feus were seldom given of agricultural estates, but almost always for building purposes. In ancient times, however, estates were given on the same tenure, and the universal condition of those feus was an annual feu duty, sometimes almost nominal, and sometimes substantial, depending upon the particular occasion. Occasional dues were also required—such as in England, under copyhold tenure, were known as fines, but which in Scotland were called casualties, because they only occurred as particular cases arose. During the Middle Ages great abuses arose in this direction, heavy dues being exacted for marriage and wardship of minors. A remarkable historical change had taken place in these dues owing to the alarm and panic excited by the Rebellions of 1715 and 1745. The alarm passed away, but left some permanent effect. It attracted the attention of Parliament and of public men to the state of the Feudal Law in Scotland, and led to a great reform, principally under the guidance of one of the most eminent and celebrated men that Scotland had ever produced—namely, Forbes of Culloden, long President of the Court of Session in Scotland and one of the greatest lawyers and statesmen of his day. The anxiety to which he had referred gave rise to an Act passed in 1747. It was passed early in the year, and Forbes of Culloden died at the conclusion of the year; but it was his contribution in the main to the future government of the country. He earnestly wished that those Members of their Lordships' House who were interested in this particular question would look at that Statute. They were now dealing with the question of agrarian reform; but, as far as he could see, modern Statutes upon that question were characterized by a total absence of any intelligible principle. At that time there had been no weakness in removing tenures, or incidents of tenure, which were at variance with public policy; they were condemned, and they were swept away. On the other hand, there had been no weakness in refusing to make those alterations compatible with justice and private rights. The principle of the Act of 1747 was to abolish all those casualties which were dangerous to the public interest, but to abolish them by the principle of commutation. Some were abolished absolutely, such as those on wardship and marriage of minors, and all those which were deemed contrary to the interests of the State or to the improvement of land tenure in Scotland. But the superiors whose rights were swept away were entitled to compensation from their tenants or vassals, and the duty of seeing what should be the commutation price was laid upon the Court of Session—the highest Court in Scotland. This Act, however, did not abolish the payment of the casualty to be paid on a change of family, the ancient principle of Feudal Law being that the superior had given the land to the vassal and his heirs for ever, and if the land was sold a casualty of a year's rent was demanded. From 1747 to the present day casualties upon the succession of a purchaser had been regularly paid, and they were as much part of the income from feus as the annual Feu Duty. He must direct the attention of their Lordships to a singular circumstance connected with these casualties. The casualty did not merge until the death of the seller. Of course the seller of an estate might live for 20 or 40 years after the sale; and during the whole of that time the title of the purchaser would be incomplete under the Feudal Law. He need not tell their Lordships how disagreeable it was to hold an estate with an imperfect title. In order to avoid this a device was set up. A mid-superiority was created. That was the state of things until the other day. For many years he believed this device was never tested. No such case actually arose until 1821 to deprive the superior of his casualty. Then it was found that as it was possible to interpose a mid-superiority between the tenant and the superior, it might be found possible to carry it further, so as to deprive a superior of his casualty. That was the state of matters down to 1838. A Commission of a very powerful character was in that year appointed to look into the question in Scotland. The Commissioners recommended that all these mid-superiorities should be done away with, and the fact of a man being duly infefted *ipso facto* constituted him vassal of the superior. This recommendation of the Commission of 1838 was never carried into effect until the year 1874. He was then in communication with the then Lord Advocate, and other Members of the Government at that time; and they pointed out to him that the Bill was drawn up in strict accordance with the recommendation of the Commissioners of 1838, that it was in strict accordance with the general course of reform in land tenures in Scotland, and they also stated that it proceeded on the principle of the Act of 1747, and gave the power of commutation to the vassal for these casualties, and fixed the commutation rate. For one and a half casualty every vassal could free his property from liability for these casualties. That was the main hinge of the Statute of 1874, and it was the principle on which Parliament had always acted in the abolition of duties, imposts, dues, or customs. He confessed that in 1874 he thought the commutation rate very low. A year's rent might be obviously due within seven months, and the vassal would escape, and the estate would be free for ever by paying the casualty, which would be thus due in a few months, and a half more. The then Lord Advocate held that it was a very low rate of commutation; but it was a great object of public policy to get rid of these casualties, and in other respects it was an important improvement of the Feudal Law. He at once assented to these reasons, and was a willing party to the compromise of 1874. Some persons said that there was no bargain in the matter. True, there was no personal bargain. There could and ought to be no personal bargains in questions of this kind; but on the face of the Statute there was that compromise and balance between opposing interests which had marked the progress of all reform in these tenures in Scotland. On the one hand, the vassal was relieved of a great number of legal forms and barriers which it was necessary to go through in order to complete his title; and, on the other hand, a power of redemption was given to him as against his superior. From his own experience, as well as on the highest authority in Scotland—that of the late Lord Curriehill — he knew that the exaction of these casualties were as much accounted a regular part of the feudal duties as the annual Feu Duty. Lord Curriehill was the greatest conveyancing lawyer in Scotland, and had mainly to do with the drawing up of the Act of 1874. Parliament had been told in "another place" that these casualties were easily evaded, and that the Act of 1874 had done a great injustice in closing the door to evasion. That was a mistake. The Judges of the Court of Session on several occasions when these questions had come before them, although with all reserve judicially, had distinctly found that the evasion was one of a statutory obligation. By the Statute of 1747 all these customary obligations became statutory obligations; and the Court of Session had particularly alluded to them as statutory obligations. It was an entire misrepresentation of the fact to suppose that the Act of 1874 was drawn up in contempt of the rights of the vassals. With regard to the general question, how far this was contrary to public policy, he did not profess to say. As matters now stood, as affecting large estates, he did not think a change would lead to the improvement of land. He was, nevertheless, disposed to admit that everything in the nature of casualties should, if possible, be abolished, that all obligations between man and man should be as clear and definite as possible, so that each party might know exactly what he had to pay and what he had to receive. Uncertain duties, merging at uncertain dates, were against public policy; and he would at once consent to the abolition of them on the established principles of commutation. But he earnestly pressed on their Lordships that they should not devise inconsistent principles. They ought not to abolish these casualties by the opening of a side door of a delusive character. By the 1st clause of this Bill they would go back on the great reform of 1874. They would re-enable persons to interject a mid-superiority between the superior and the purchaser of land. They would go back to the simplification of title by menns of collusive titles. It was against public policy to abolish these casualties in that way. He would readily submit to any compromise in this matter which the Public Authorities in Scotland and Parliament, acting under the advice of the greatest lawyers and statesmen in Scotland, would be willing to name as a commutation of these duties. But this clause would not abolish casualties. The object of public policy was not attained. These casualties would remain. His best authority for this statement was the fact that Clause 1, as now drawn up, simply postponed the casualties for one generation, or one death. The heir of the seller might enter, and enable the purchaser to elude the duty. This was true; but then his heir could not again do so. They would then revert exactly to the same state of the law in which these casualties merged on particular occasions. A most unseemly state of the law it was. They would have a man hunting for the possible heir of the last seller, who might be gone to Australia, or be already dead; and the man must make a bargain, or bribe another to lend his name for delusive and collusive purposes. Was that a reform of the law of tenure? On the contrary, it was going back to the system which was abolished in 1874, which was recommended to be abolished by the Commission of 1838, and which was unquestionably against public policy. He would venture to urge that it was the object of the Government not merely to relieve trustees from an unjust interpretation of the law—at least from an interpretation of the law which imposed upon them unjust consequences—and to all that he entirely assented. But if they also wished to deal with the question of casualties by abolishing them altogether, in order to simplify title, they should postpone Clause 1 until another Session. Their Lordships must not suppose that this affected only large estates of agricultural property. But there was a prospect of agricultural estates in Scotland coming into a greater number of hands. One estate which had been held by the same family for 700 or 800 years had this year been unfortunately brought to the hammer, and bought in comparatively small parcels by a large number of persons. These persons and their heirs would, of course, be liable, under the term of their respective feu-duties, to these casualties; and he was quite willing to admit, and hold strongly, that, while the continuance of these casualties was not a public evil, so long as they were confined to a few large estates, it would be a serious mischief if a great number of persons, holding small parcels of land, were called upon to pay them. He was, therefore, in favour of the principle of abolition on the old principle of commutation. He thought the law ought to be made compulsory. He would like to call the attention of the Secretary for Scotland to the fact that these casualties had been practically abolished, even as regarded small building feus. This clause would not deal equitably with the subject, and would have the result of complicating matters. Legislation on great questions of this kind with reference to a particular case was always rather dangerous. He was not prepared to say that it was always unjust or unnecessary. A particular case might call the attention of Parliament to a grievance which was general. There was no delicacy in referring to a special case which had attracted public attention. That was the case of the son of one of the most distinguished men that Scotland had ever produced. He alluded to Sir Charles Lyell. He believed it was still *sub judice*. The substance of it, he understood, was that the son, being his father's proper heir, and being entitled to enter on his estate on the ordinary relief duty, was, or might have been, liable to pay the heavy casualty of a singular successor, because the property was under trust. He believed that it was a grievous injustice which arose out of a mere technicality of the law when the estate was left in trust. He entirely agreed with the Bill, so far as the 2nd clause was concerned, which dealt with a real injustice and evil which had arisen by accident out of such a technicality. What he proposed was to push forward that part of the Bill which was not contentious, and leave the remainder, which was not so urgent, to a new Session of Parliament.

THE DUKE OF BUCCLEUCH said, he endorsed the views of the noble Duke that the Secretary for Scotland should postpone the contentious portions of the Bill. In his opinion, the 1st clause had been badly drafted, and its language was uncertain. During the Recess attention might be given to the subject, and more statesman-like and satisfactory proposals might be submitted next Session. The effect of the present Bill would be to revive an old device, and to render the new machinery more complex than it was before. It was not his intention to oppose the second reading; but he trusted that when they went into Committee his noble Friend would adopt his suggestion.

LORD BRAMWELL desired to express an opinion on this Bill, even though it related to a question of Scotch law. He might mention the curious fact that there was once a case in which six Scotchmen were equally divided in opinion, and he was left to give the casting vote. He did not quote that case in order to prove that he was right, but to show that he might without impropriety say a few words on the present Bill. His view was entirely in accord with that which had been presented to their Lordships by the noble Duke (the Duke of Argyll). The title of the Bill was, no doubt unintentionally, misleading. As a question of conveyancing, the 1st section was a retrograde one. That clearly appeared from a judgment given by Lord Blackburn, who, although an English lawyer was by birth a Scotchman. It was manifest that in the opinion of the noble and learned Lord the system of conveyancing, which the 1st section of this Bill proposed to reintroduce, was a complicated system, and open to serious objection. But the Bill was not merely one of conveyancing; it was a question of a transfer of value. That was to say, the effect of the 1st clause would be to diminish the value of all superiorities, and to augment the value of all feus, because the effect of it would be that the superior would not be able to get his year's value from the purchaser, so that the present feuar or vassal would be able to sell for a better price. He was justified in that view by a report which had been sent to him by a committee of the Society of Writers to the Signet. That committee stated that the effect of the measure would be simply to enable the vassal to retain money which was really due by him to the superior. There seemed to be an idea that this could only happen once; but that was a mistake. The same thing would recur every time a vassal died after having sold an estate; and there would be no limitation whatever on the time to which the measure was proposed to extend. He had heard no valid reason why the old system which was abrogated by the Act of 1874 should be re-introduced. That Act was really a bargain made by the Legislature between the superiors and the vassals. The superiors obtained the right to enforce payment of a year's value, and got rid of the device by which vassals could avoid paying it; while, on the other hand, the vassals got a right of redemption which formerly they did not possess. If it rested with him to say whether Clause 1 was a just and righteous clause as between superior and vassal, he should say no. But, looking at the state of the House and the period of the Session, when scarcely a Scotch Peer interested in the matter was present, he thought it would be a little hard to force this clause through if the question was even doubtful.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HALSBURY) said, he concurred so far with his noble Friend, and doubted whether it was altogether true to say that this was a Conveyancing Clause at all. It was really a question of the alteration of the law in regard to property, and he doubted whether, in the circumstances, it would be an appropriate exercise of their Lordships' time to deal with property without full notice to those who were interested in the matter. He had some reason to think that those who were interested in the matter were under the impression that

this part of the Bill was to be dropped, and he thought his noble Friend in charge of the Bill would do well to adopt the suggestion of the noble Duke, and drop the contentious portion of the Bill, and proceed with the non-contentious portion.

THE MARQUESS OF LOTHIAN said, he would acquiesce in the suggestion of the noble Duke. After the strong expression of opinion from all quarters of the House, he felt that if he were to press the 1st clause there would be grave risk, not only of the loss of the clause, but of the whole Bill. Rather than lose the Bill, he would prefer to move that the 1st clause should be expunged. The 2nd clause was a very valuable one, and would deal with a question which had excited a considerable amount of public attention. If a measure for dealing with casualties was to be introduced into Parliament, it had much better come as a Bill treating the subject *de novo* than that it should be handicapped by the 1st clause of this Bill. Without committing himself as to what the Government would do next Session on the subject of casualties, he assented to the course suggested, and whether it was possible or not to deal with casualties in general, he would move to expunge the 1st clause.

Motion *agreed to;* Bill read 2ª accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House on *Tuesday* next.

OPEN SPACES (DUBLIN) BILL.—(No. 213.)

(*The Lord Ardilaun.*)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

LORD MOUNT-TEMPLE, in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, the measure had come up from the House of Commons, and its object was to confer the same powers on the Corporation of Dublin in regard to useless and unnecessary roads as were exercised by the Grand Juries outside the city. It would enable the Corporation to narrow such roads as were unnecessarily wide, in order to save unnecessary expenditure. In the House of Commons it was proposed to insert these powers in the General Open Spaces Bill, which he (Lord Mount-Temple) had charge of in their Lordships' House; but the construction of that measure rendered it impossible to insert these provisions, seeing that the Bill dealt only with amendments of the existing law.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ᵃ."—(*The Lord Mount-Temple.*)

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HALSBURY) said, he hoped that their Lordships would not read this most extraordinary Bill a second time. The Bill provided that—

> "It shall and may be lawful for the Corporation to narrow such roads as the borough surveyor may report to be unnecessarily wide, and to stop up any roads which may appear to them to be useless."

No provision was made in the Bill as to what was to happen to anyone's property affected by such a proceeding. No machinery was provided for awarding compensation, or for dealing with frontages. For the Corporation of Dublin and its borough surveyor to be absolute masters of other people's property, and to have power to stop up any roads which they might choose to consider unnecessary, would be an extraordinary state of things. And that was the whole Bill. If any of their Lordships had had questions affecting the closing up or the narrowing of roads before them at Quarter Sessions they would know what a large amount of consideration they involved—how many witnesses it was necessary to call on the one side and on the other, and how difficult it was to arrive at a decision. Everyone received a hearing. But here, forsooth, it was proposed to settle such matters on the mere *ipse dixit* of the borough surveyor. It seemed to him, moreover, a strange thing that in a Bill called an Open Spaces Bill, power should be sought for closing up roads. The whole Bill was so crude and devoid of machinery and lacked all protection to the public or to the owners of property that he hoped their Lordships would not read the Bill a second time.

LORD MOUNT-TEMPLE said, he quite admitted that the clause to which the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack took exception was not a proper one. But the Bill had come up with the unanimous assent of the House of Commons, and he recommended their Lordships to consider whether they might not be able to suggest a better clause than the present one in Committee, especially as the principle of the Bill was not objected to. If their Lordships read the Bill a second time, he promised that the promoters would modify the clause and remove the objections to which it was at present exposed. It was a measure which was eagerly desired by Irish Members connected with Dublin, and he could see no harm in giving to the City of Dublin the same powers as were exercised outside of it under similar precautions. He trusted their Lordships would not reject the Bill.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Viscount CROSS) said, the Bill only contained one operative clause, and that was stated to be one which they ought not to pass, and so stated by the noble Lord who moved the second reading. If that clause was expunged, nothing would remain of the measure for their Lordships to consider. It contained a principle which everyone objected to, and, instead of reading the Bill a second time, he suggested that it should be dropped, and that the noble Lord should introduce another Bill of a less objectionable kind, allow it to be properly discussed by their Lordships, and send it down to the other House.

LORD MOUNT-TEMPLE said, he had not stated that the principle of the clause was objectionable, but that its method was faulty in having no proper securities against abuse or carelessness. He thought that Dublin should have the same advantages in regard to narrowing and closing unnecessary roads as the rest of Ireland possessed.

On Question ? *Resolved* in the *negative.*

TRUSTEE SAVINGS BANKS BILL.

(*The Lord Elphinstone.*)

(NO. 221.) COMMITTEE.

Order of the Day for the House to be put into Committee, read.

Moved, "That the House do now resolve itself into Committee upon the said Bill."—(*The Lord Elphinstone.*)

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (The Duke of BUCKINGHAM and CHANDOS) said, he must take occasion to call attention to a few of its provisions which he deemed objectionable. In the first place, the Bill had come upon some of those who, like himself, were trustees of savings banks with considerable surprise. The Bill, which had not been circulated before it was read a second time, contained powers which were unusual; and although he believed no trustees of savings banks would object to inquiry into the stability of the institutions with which they were connected, still, looking to the evils of panic unnecessarily excited, he urged that there should be some real provision that inquiry should not be demanded where it was not necessary. The Bill provided that the Treasury might issue a Commission of Inquiry if satisfied, on the representation of such a number of the depositors as they might consider sufficient, that an inquiry was reasonable. There should be some indication of the number of depositors who should have the power of claiming this inquiry; and also there should be some indication of the class of persons to whom the conduct of the inquiry should be intrusted.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HALSBURY) said, he agreed to what the noble Duke had said as to the class of persons to be intrusted with this important duty, and what he should propose in Committee was, that, instead of the ordering of the inquiry being in the absolute discretion of the Treasury, the function of the Treasury should be to make an application to a Judge of the High Court, who should, on being satisfied that there was reason for making an inquiry, delegate the power of making an inquiry to a Master of the Supreme Court of Judicature in England or Ireland, or an Advocate or Writer of the Signet selected by the Court of Session in Scotland. With those Amendments the difficulties felt by the noble Duke would, he thought, be in great part removed.

Motion *agreed to;* House in Committee accordingly: Amendments made: The Report thereof to be received *To-morrow;* and Bill to be *printed.* (No. 245.)

PUBLIC LIBRARIES (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 238.)

(*The Earl of Crawford.*)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

THE EARL OF CRAWFORD, in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, it was a consolidating and amending measure.

The Duke of Buckingham and Chandos

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Earl of Crawford.*)

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (The Marquess of LOTHIAN) observed, that this Bill, which, as the noble Earl had said, was a consolidating and amending one, appeared to him to be a useful and practical measure.

Motion *agreed to;* Bill read 2ª accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House *To-morrow.*

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE (No. 1) BILL.—OBSERVATIONS.

LORD DENMAN said, that on the 31st of January last, when the second reading of the Women's Suffrage Bill was moved, an Amendment moved by the noble Marquess the Head of the Government, that the Bill be read a second time, both at the end of six calendar months or of six lunar months, was agreed to. That period had elapsed. The end of that time happened to be a Sunday. He wished that the Bill should be put down for next Monday or Tuesday; but that was considered by the Clerk of Parliaments to be out of Order. He now desired to proceed with the second reading of the Bill.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of SALISBURY) supposing that six calendar months were the legal period, said, he thought that the proceeding of the noble Lord would not be out of Order, and that the Bill could be allowed to go forward.

LORD DENMAN said, that he would put the second reading of the Bill down for next Tuesday, when it would take precedence of Motions and other Business.

TRUCK BILL.

Returned from the Commons with several of the amendments *agreed to,* one *agreed to* with an amendment, and several *disagreed to,* with reasons for such disagreement, and with a consequential amendment to the Bill: The said amendments and reasons to be *printed.* (No. 239.)

House adjourned at a quarter past
Six o'clock, till To-morrow,
a quarter past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 25*th August*, 1887.

MINUTES.]—SUPPLY—*considered in Committee* —*Resolutions* [August 24] *reported*.

PUBLIC BILLS—*Committee*—Labourers' Allotments * [329]—R.P.

Withdrawn—Parish Allotments Committees * [170].

QUESTIONS.

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POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—DELIVERY AT GLENGEVLIN, CO. CAVAN.

MR. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.) asked the Postmaster General, If he will arrange to have letters delivered at Glengevlin, County Cavan, on six days of the week instead of four days weekly, which is the present practice?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University), in reply, said, that the expenditure for the present service exceeded the available revenue, and he regretted, therefore, that he could not grant an extension.

MINES REGULATION ACTS—THE TAWD VALE COLLIERY, SKELMERSDALE.

MR. BURT (Morpeth) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, If he can say whether it is true, as alleged, that, on the night of the 12th June, a shift of day-wage men entered the Park Mine of the Tawd Vale Colliery, Skelmersdale, without a report of the condition of the mine required by law having been made; and, whether workmen other than those engaged in the firing of shots were allowed in that part of the mine during the time such shots were being fired?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I am informed by the Inspector that 28 day workmen did go down at 9.30 p.m. on Sunday evening, June 12, to repair the roads in the mine referred to, although the last formal inspection had been made at 11 a.m. on the same day. As this case may come before a Court of Justice, it is better that I should refrain from expressing an opinion whether there has been an infringement of the law; but, if applied to, I shall be willing to give my sanction for proceedings to be instituted against the manager. So far as I can ascertain, there were no shots fired on the night of June 12.

BOARD OF TRADE (RAILWAY DEPARTMENT)—THE RAILWAY WHISTLE AT NIGHT IN THE METROPOLIS.

MR. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether he has considered the possibility of mitigating the nuisance caused by the constant use of the railway whistle at night on some railway lines to the inhabitants of the Metropolis; and, what is the result of his correspondence with the Railway Companies on this subject?

THE SECRETARY (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): The Board of Trade have communicated with the Companies, and are assured that every effort will be made to reduce the nuisance caused by whistling as much as possible.

METROPOLIS (CLOSED BURIAL GROUNDS) — STATE OF WHITFIELD CHAPEL BURIAL GROUND, TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD.

MR. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been called to the state of Whitfield Chapel Burial Ground, Tottenham Court Road; if he is aware that it has been converted into a ground for public shows and amusements; and, whether he has any power to put a stop to the proceedings which have been described as disgraceful by the Parliamentary Committee of the Vestry of St. Pancras?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.), in reply, said, he was informed by the Commissioner of Police that the ground had been let to a person who was using it as a place of entertainment, and had erected swings and shooting galleries. An injunction had been obtained restraining the person from continuing a noisy entertainment, and from giving annoyance to worshippers in the chapel. A summons had been taken out against the person under the Unlawful Fairs Act, and would be heard that day.

PUBLIC HEALTH (METROPOLIS)—THE REGENT'S CANAL BASIN.

MR. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.) asked the President of the Local Government Board, Whether his attention has been called to the condition of the Regent's Canal Basin; if he is aware that it is covered with slime; that many dead animals have been taken out of it; and that it emits a bad smell most obnoxious to the neighbourhood; and, whether he will inquire into the possibility of improving its present state?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): Prior to the Notice of this Question, my attention had not been called to the condition of the Regent's Canal Basin. I have obtained a Report from the Medical Officer of Health of St. Pancras on the subject. It appears, as to slime, that when the wind blows from the northerly points anything upon the surface of the arm of the Canal leading to the basin is blown down into the basin and collects at the extreme southern end. With regard to dead animals, the Medical Officer of Health states that the basin and the Canal itself are the receptacles for most of the dead animals of the neighbourhood. The Company clear them away twice a-week. Occasionally there has been delay; but, as a rule, the duty is fairly well done. With regard to the bad smell, I am informed that there have been complaints from a resident on the bank of the arm leading to the basin; but the Medical Officer of Health has not been able to verify any nuisance, probably from its fitful occurrence. I have no doubt that the condition of the basin is unsatisfactory. The Medical Officer of Health has made certain suggestions with regard to the more frequent dredging of the basin and other matters; and I am informed that the Vestry are in communication with the Canal Company on the subject. Some time since the Chief Sanitary Inspector received instructions to have the Canal constantly watched, with a view to taking proceedings, if necessary.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND) — POWERS OF COMMITMENT OF A COUNTY COURT JUDGE.

MR. P. O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.) asked Mr. Attorney General for Ireland, Whether he is aware that a man, named Philip Quigley, was committed for contempt of Court, for refusal to sign a document, by the County Court Judge of Monaghan, on the 23rd of May last, to Dundalk Gaol, and is still confined there; whether a County Court Judge has power to commit for contempt of Court for a longer term than a fortnight; and, if so, what is the maximum term; and, whether he will inquire into the circumstances of Quigley's committal?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. GIBSON) (Liverpool, Walton), in reply, said, that Quigley had been committed on the 25th, not the 23rd of May, under an order made by the County Court Judge in the exercise of the equitable jurisdiction vested in him under 40 & 41 *Vict.* c. 56, which gives him the powers of the Court of Chancery with regard to contempt. Quigley contumaciously refused to sign an assignment, and had not yet purged his contempt.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): How long can this man be kept in?

MR. GIBSON: The ordinary rule is, in cases of contempt, that a man shall remain in custody until he has purged his contempt. He has been ordered to sign a deed by the Court, and when he does this he will be discharged.

ADMIRALTY—THE DOCKYARDS—DISMISSAL OF WORKMEN AT PORTSMOUTH.

SIR SAMUEL WILSON (Portsmouth) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether it is proposed that any new ships are to be built at Portsmouth to employ the permanent hands, who cannot be dismissed, after the *Trafalgar* is completed; whether it is the case that some hundreds of men are about to be dismissed from the Portsmouth Dockyard immediately; and, if so, how many this year and next; whether extra hands have been put on temporarily at Portsmouth during the past three months; and, if so, how many; whether, in view of the proposed discharges, it would have been possible for the Dockyard hands to have done the work for which extra men have recently been engaged; whether it is still his intention to construct the *Melpomene* at Portsmouth, as mentioned in the Naval Report of *The Times* of 20th August; whether, after the enormous expenditure in constructing the Portsmouth Dockyard, and bringing together workmen to be employed there, the Government intend to stop shipbuilding there; whether about 20 ships are now being built at private yards for the Government; what number of workmen have left the Service each year in the last three years from deaths, superannuation, &c.; and, whether the Government intend to build any more iron-clads, to take the place of worn-out and obsolete ships now in the Service?

The FIRST LORD (Lord George Hamilton) (Middlesex, Ealing): Though the *Trafalgar* will be launched next month, her completion will occupy many men for some time to come. A considerable number of ships will be built during the ensuing year in the Royal Dockyards sufficient to employ not only the permanent hands, but many thousands of hired workmen. Certain discharges from Portsmouth Dockyard will be necessary during the present year and the next; but the exact number cannot be estimated until the shipbuilding programme for 1888-9 is definitely settled. Endeavours are being made to provide useful work so as to reduce discharges; but their whole effect cannot be foretold. The *Melpomene* will be built at Portsmouth. Owing to the sudden commissioning of a large number of ships for the recent naval evolutions, it was found necessary to enter 200 extra hands to complete the work, as the regular Dockyard *employés* could not have accomplished it within the necessary time. There are six, not 20, ships now building by contract, two of which will be delivered in a few weeks. The number of men who left the five Home Yards from the causes named during the last three years were 1,173, 1,391, and 1,229 respectively. It is not proposed to lay down any new iron-clads; but our policy is to complete those now building as soon as possible. Between now and the end of the financial year we hope to add to the Fleet five armoured battle ships and five belted cruisers. These are in addition to the ships that took part in the Naval Review.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES ACT, 1875—THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS' UNION.

Lord HENRY BRUCE (Wilts, Chippenham) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether he can cause an inquiry to be made as to the truth of the alleged illegal transfer of over £2,000 from the Sick Benefit Fund to the Trade Fund of the Agricultural Labourers' Union?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Jackson) (Leeds, N.): Perhaps the noble Lord will allow me to answer the Question. I understand that the Registrar of Friendly Societies has no official information as to the alleged transfer, and therefore that no question can arise of action on his part. The best course would be for any person who thinks himself aggrieved to lay a full statement of the matter before the Registrar.

ADMIRALTY—SUBVENTION OF MERCHANT STEAMERS FOR WAR PURPOSES.

Captain COLOMB (Tower Hamlets, Bow, &c.) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, What are the conditions, as regards speed and coal-carrying capacity, laid down by the Admiralty as necessary to qualify a merchant steamer for annual subvention for purposes of war; and, whether the arrangements for an annual subvention to be paid to the Peninsular and Oriental Company for the *Victoria*, *Britannia*, and *Oceana* include any stipulations as to crews and stokers; and, if so, what is the nature of such stipulations?

The SECRETARY (Mr. Forwood) (Lancashire, Ormskirk) (who replied) said: It is impossible, within the reasonable limit of an answer to a Question, to give my hon. and gallant Friend full particulars of the relative importance attached to the many points that have to be considered in determining the comparative value of merchant steamers for cruising purposes. Speed is, however, of primary consideration, and no vessel with less than 16 knots sea-going speed has been entertained. Four of the steamers retained from the Peninsular and Oriental Company exceed this rate of speed—namely, 384 knots per day, and can carry sufficient coal to maintain it for 26 days, during which they could traverse 10,300 knots. For an ordinary cruising speed of 10 knots their coal capacity is equal to 50 days' consumption. In addition to this quantity of coal they have room for from 1,800 to 2,000 troops. Allowing for hospital, issuing rooms, and the other requirements of Transport Regulations, this is all she could do; and then she could not take coal in all the holds, as we should require baggage room and stowage for provisions. I am assured that with a slight change in the form of screw, their speed would exceed 17 knots. In reply to the second part of the Question, the agreement stipulates for the Company, if required, to find the crew according to the usual Transport

Regulations. The Company are also under an obligation to arrange, as far as possible, that the European portion of their complement shall be members of the Royal Naval Reserve, and for their services being at the disposition of the Admiralty.

PARLIAMENTARY VOTERS (SCOTLAND) — DISQUALIFICATION FOR NON-PAYMENT OF POOR RATES.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether the statement in *The Highland News* is correct, that about 2,000 crofters, small tenants, in Inverness-shire, 1,736 in Ross-shire, and 539 in Sutherlandshire, have been disqualified and kept off the voters' roll for non-payment of poor rates in June; whether large farmers of over £50 rental are retained on the roll, whether they pay their poor rates or not; and, if so, whether the Government will introduce a measure to place small tenants in the same position in reference to this matter as the larger tenants?

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): Two thousand small tenants in Inverness-shire have been reported to the assessor as not having paid their rates, 1,599 of these being crofters. I have no accurate information as to the number in Sutherlandshire; but it is believed to be between 500 and 600. As regards Ross-shire, I am informed that 1,215 crofters and 521 other persons have been returned to the county assessor as not having paid poor rates. Non-payment of rates is a disqualification for electors who were enfranchised by the two last Reform Acts. Tenants paying over £50 of rent are not enfranchised under the Acts of 1868 or 1885, but under the Act of 1832. Her Majesty's Government are not prepared to bring in a Bill regarding franchise, the policy of reform legislation having been not to interfere with any existing franchise in extending the franchise to other householders on such conditions as to the Legislature seemed wise.

THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON ARMY AND NAVY ESTIMATES—INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ACCOUNTANTS.

Mr. BOORD (Greenwich) asked the Secretary of State for War, What instructions have been given to the accountants appointed to investigate and report upon the accounts of the Army Manufacturing Departments, and what is the estimated cost of the investigation; and, whether one of the accountants selected to report upon the correctness of the War Office system has been actively engaged in getting up the case against the War Office officials before the Select Committee on Army and Navy Estimates?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. E. Stanhope) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): My hon. Friend will find a copy of the instructions given to the accountants in the Fifth Report of the Committee on Army and Navy Estimates. I have made inquiries from the Secretary to the Treasury as to the estimated cost of the investigation, and I find that he is not yet able to give me such an Estimate as can be laid before the House. I believe it is true that one of these accountants has been assisting my noble Friend the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) in preparing for the work of investigating the accounts of the Army Manufacturing Departments. But he has now been selected by the President of the Society of Chartered Accountants to discharge a most responsible public duty; and I have no reason to doubt, from his high general reputation, that he will perform it with impartiality.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—APPOINTMENT OF JUDGES—SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE (IRELAND) BILL.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the Government will abstain from appointing any successor to the late Mr. Justice Lawson until Parliament has had an opportunity of considering the Supreme Court of Judicature (Ireland) Amendment Bill?

Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.) also asked the right hon. Gentleman, Whether, having regard to the fact that according to the latest annual Return in the Judicial Statistics there were tried by the 15 Common Law English Judges 3,626 prisoners and 2,282 civil actions, and by the 10 Common Law Irish Judges 1,014 prisoners and 588 civil actions, he will abstain from filling up the present vacancy in the Irish Common Law Bench until Parliament has had the opportunity of considering whether the number of the Irish Judges cannot be reduced?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): I am anxious, of course, to carry out as far as I can the policy expressed in the Bill laid on the Table of the House. The hon. Gentleman and right hon. Gentleman are aware that the Judgeship which has been made vacant by the death of Mr. Justice Lawson is not one of those which it was proposed to abolish either by the Bill of the late Chief Secretary or by the Bill which I have laid on the Table of the House; and though I shall do everything in my power to carry out generously everything involved in that Bill, I could not give the pledge which the hon. Gentlemen ask for.

EVICTIONS (IRELAND)—WESTMEATH.

MR. D. SULLIVAN (Westmeath, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether it is true that the Sub-Sheriff of Westmeath drove from Mullingar to Tang on Wednesday the 17th instant, a distance of 18 miles, to attend an eviction, without police protection, owing to the peaceable state of the county; whether, during the process of evicting Patrick Dillon, one of the tenants on Mr. Frederick Russell's estate, the police behaved in a violent manner, batoning men and women indiscriminately; and, whether the Government will cause an inquiry to be made into the conduct of the police on the occasion?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. GIBSON) (Liverpool, Walton) (who replied) said, it was the case that the Sub-Sheriff drove, for the purpose of executing 24 judgment decrees, the distance stated without police protection. That appeared to have been due to his personal popularity. On endeavouring to gain access to Dillon's house the police did not behave in a violent manner, nor did they baton any women. On the contrary, they acted with the greatest forbearance towards the people, as was testified by the Roman Catholic clergyman, the Rev. Mr. Byrne, at the close of the day. Dillon was not evicted owing to illness. No inquiry was necessary.

MR. D. SULLIVAN asked from whom the information came?

MR. GIBSON: From the usual sources.

MR. D. SULLIVAN: The police, I suppose.

EGYPT — ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE—THE REPORTS.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Why the later Reports of Mr. Justice West, specially deputed by Her Majesty's Government to inquire into the administration of justice in Egypt, have never been laid before Parliament; and, whether certain extracts from those Reports which got into the newspapers at the time, and which condemned in very strong terms the action of the Courts, and the treatment of untried prisoners in the gaols, were genuine, especially those which set forth that, owing to the inefficiency of the new police and new tribunals, brigandage had greatly increased; that in view to its suppression methods more arbitrary than those of the old Cazees had been adopted; that people were thrown into prison without evidence and kept there without trial; and that, in consequence, great abuses prevailed in the gaols?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): A Report of Mr. Justice West on Judicial Organization in Egypt was published in Egypt No. 5, 1886, page 28. Some reference is made in that Report to abuses such as are mentioned in the Question. Mr. West was not specially deputed by Her Majesty's Government to inquire into the administration of justice in Egypt. He was selected and appointed by the Egyptian Government to be Procureur Général of the Indigenous Courts, and he drew up the Paper in question at the request of Sir Evelyn Baring. Mr. Justice West made a further Report containing a long and technical explanation of a Code of Criminal Procedure which he had prepared for the Native tribunals. This was referred to a Commission for consideration. The Papers will be examined, in order to see if anything can be presented with advantage. I may add that great reforms have been accomplished in the particulars upon which Mr. West animadverted.

EGYPT (FINANCE, &c.)—ABOLITION OF THE CORVEE—THE NATIVE ARMY.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, with regard to Egypt, What final arrangement has been come to with the French and other Powers for finding the money, beyond that assigned for administrative purposes by the Convention, which is required to substitute paid labour for part of the corvée and to pay the Native Army, and from what source the money is to come in each case; whether the 9,393 men of the Native Army include the special battalions raised to garrison Suakin; what is the calculated cost of the Egyptian Army, exclusive of the payments for European troops and the British Navy, and inclusive of Suakin; and, whether the Financial Papers relating to Egypt, promised in a few days, will be got out quickly, and will contain the Budget for the present year?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Sir James Fergusson) (Manchester, N.E.): As regards the cost of hired labour instead of corvée, a revised Decree has been accepted by the French Government, and has been proposed to the other Powers, sanctioning the charge of £250,000. This charge will form part of the general administrative expenses to be paid out of the general revenues. No arrangement has been come to with the other Powers with reference to the extra cost of the Egyptian Army beyond £130,000; but the Egyptian Revenue of this year will probably exceed that estimated by the Convention by more than £500,000. Further, is is hoped that the reduction of the British Forces in Egypt will lead to a corresponding reduction in the cost of the Army of Occupation. The 9,393 of all ranks of the Egyptian Army include the garrison of Suakin. The total cost of the Egyptian Army is E£367,000. The Financial Papers will be ready very shortly. Further reductions are still under discussion.

PUBLIC HEALTH (METROPOLIS)—CONDITION OF TRAFALGAR SQUARE.

Mr. KIMBER (Wandsworth) asked the First Commissioner of Works, Whether his attention has been called to the present filthy state of the water in Trafalgar Square, and if he is aware of its cause; how often the water is changed; whether he can hold out any hope that an improvement may shortly be effected; whether the attention of his Department had been called to the fact that through the summer months the square is used at night as a sleeping place by vagrants, to the annoyance of the inhabitants; and, whether any steps can be taken, either to abate this practice or to obviate its attendant consequences, which prevent the place and the seats therein from being used by any other persons even in the daytime?

The FIRST COMMISSIONER (Mr. Plunket) (Dublin University): The water in the basins of Trafalgar Square is being constantly replenished; besides this, these basins are, under ordinary circumstances, completely cleaned out three times a-year; but I have given directions that this operation shall be immediately performed. The fact is that during this long spell of fine weather a great number of homeless people have congregated in Trafalgar Square at night for the purpose of sleeping there; and before they vanish in the morning some of them not only perform ablutions at the fountains, but deposit various portions of their raiment and other chattels in the basins. I am afraid that these nocturnal visitors also leave behind them certain nomad populations on the benches, which make them not very safe for cleanly people afterwards; but it is not easy to see what can be done. I have communicated with the police, and they have succeeded to a great extent in checking the disorderly and offensive conduct which was lately complained of. But I have not the power, even if I had the will—and I certainly have not the will—to banish these unfortunate creatures from the Square altogether; and I should be very unwilling to take away the seats which were placed there by the charity of Lord Brabazon—I presume mainly for the use of the poor. All I can do is to see that our rule that the Square, including the benches, is to be washed down every morning, and that all filth and rubbish is to be cleared away, shall be carefully carried out, as I believe it now is; and, as I have said, the fountains shall be as often as necessary cleaned.

Mr. KIMBER asked, whether it was a fact that the water used in the Square was obtained from the neighbouring baths and washhouses?

Mr. PLUNKET said, it was not a fact. The water came from the Water Company.

LAW AND JUSTICE (ENGLAND AND WALES)—BURNING OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, COLWYN BAY.

Mr. T. E. ELLIS (Merionethshire) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been called to a letter in *The Liverpool Courier* of 8th August, from the Rev. W. Venables Williams, Vicar of Llandrillo, Denbighshire, in which he attempts to connect the Nonconformists of his parish with the burning of St. Paul's Church, Colwyn Bay, and states that he has evidence in his possession which leaves no doubt as to the identity of the individual who set fire to the church, and that stores of lime and gas tar were carted into a neighbouring farmhouse in order to make solid balls for maiming the police; whether the inhabitants of the parish have petitioned the Home Office to instruct the Public Prosecutor to take action in the matter, so that these serious charges may be examined; and, whether any steps will be taken to grant their request?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): No, Sir; I have not seen the letter in question; but I have received a Petition from certain tithepayers and Nonconformists in the parish asking me to instruct the Public Prosecutor to institute proceedings for the purpose of compelling the rev. gentleman to reveal all the evidence in his possession. There are no means by which I or anyone else can do this. I can only say that I hope that if the rev. gentleman, or any other person, has in his possession any evidence with reference to any alleged crime, he will lose no time in communicating all particulars to the proper authorities.

POST OFFICE—CIRCULARS TO MEMBERS OF FRIENDLY SOCIETIES.

Sir EDWARD BIRKBECK (Norfolk, E.) asked the Postmaster General, Whether his attention has been called to the fact that Circulars issued to members of Friendly Societies, containing a statement of arrears of contributions and fines, and summoning them to their several periodical meetings, are charged 1*d.* postage, while the same information or matter, placed on a separate paper and enclosed in another paper is only charged a halfpenny; and, whether any steps can be taken to put an end to an anomaly which is productive of much inconvenience, and without any apparent advantage to the Revenue?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University): In reply to the hon. Member, I have to state that I have had, as he is indeed aware, the subject of his Question for some time under consideration. There is, without doubt, an anomaly in the present practice; and it is one which, I hope, I shall see my way, with further consideration, to remove.

THE CROFTERS' COMMISSION—THE ANNUAL REPORT.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether any parishes have been determined to be crofting parishes by the Crofters' Commission since the last Return; and, whether the Annual Report of the Commission will be published before the Vote for the Commission is taken?

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): No more parishes have been determined to be crofting parishes since the last Return made to Parliament. The intention of the Commissioners to determine the parishes of Kirkwall and St. Ola and Stromness to be crofting parishes has been, as usual, advertised for the last month. No objection to this determination having been made, it is probable that it will be shortly confirmed. I promised last night to inquire as to the Report of the Commission.

POST OFFICE — SUNDAY POSTAL LABOUR—REPORT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness) asked the Postmaster General, Whether he has considered the Report of the Select Committee on Sunday Postal Labour; and, what action he intends to take in reference to it?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University): I have already carefully read the Report of the Committee; but time has not yet allowed of my making a complete examination of the evidence tendered to them. This I hope to undertake during the Recess; and I shall be very glad if I can give effect to any recommendations which are supported by evidence and appear likely to conduce to the convenience of the public and the Service.

HIGHWAY ACTS — THE SALVATION ARMY — RELIGIOUS SERVICES AT WARWICK.

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether three officers of the Salvation Army were, on Monday last, the 22nd instant, fined, without the option of appeal, by the Warwick Bench of Magistrates, for holding a religious service in the Corn Market there on Sunday the 7th instant?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): Three members of the Salvation Army were convicted by the Warwick Magistrates for obstructing the highway by holding services in the Corn Market, notwithstanding warning and caution by the police. The men have a right of appeal by law. I cannot give off-hand the names of the magistrates.

POST OFFICE — POST AND MONEY ORDER OFFICE AT WILLESDEN — SALE OF BEER.

MR. S. SMITH (Flintshire) asked the Postmaster General, Whether he is aware that the Post and Money Order Office in Vicarage Road, Willesden, is held at a shop where beer is retailed from barrels behind the counter; and, whether he intends to continue the office at this shop?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): In reply to the hon. Member, I may say that I am aware of the circumstances to which he alludes. As a general rule, I think it is desirable to avoid having post offices in shops where beer is sold; but in the case in question the premises were the most suitable that could be obtained at the time the office was opened; and as it has been well conducted for four years without complaint from the public I do not purpose to deprive the receiver of his office. I may add that the house is not licensed for the sale of beer to be drunk on the premises.

ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY — INSPECTION OF POLICE STATIONS.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If he will secure the inspection, by the Board of Works, of the following police stations in Donegal:—Linsford, Doaghbeg, Fintown, Grousehall, Gweedore Bunbeg, Redcastle, Barnesgap, Knockbrack, Aughakeely, Kincashlagh, Mynthias, Breenagh, Glenveigh, and Dunkineely, and report on the sanitary state of each, and the accommodation afforded to the men?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. GIBSON) (Liverpool, Walton) (who replied) said, he did not think he could comply with the hon. Member's request, on account of the expense which would be involved in holding the investigation. It might, however, meet the hon. Member's convenience if a Report were obtained from the local constabulary authorities with regard to the sanitary state and accommodation in each barracks. The Executive, on receiving the Report, would be in a position to see what steps should be taken in the matter.

PATENTS OFFICE INQUIRY COMMITTEE—THE PATENT OFFICE.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether the recommendations of the Patents Office Inquiry Committee, as regards the simplification of the system of examination of specifications, have been carried out; whether the publication of the arrears of Abridgments and Indexes has been resumed; and, whether anything has been definitively settled with regard to the staff and the internal regulation of the Patent Office?

MR. HANBURY (Preston) also asked the hon. Gentleman, Whether the late superintendent of the Index at the Patent Office, Mr. Michel, died or resigned nearly three years ago, and that his salary of £800 a-year had since been annually voted by the House, and re-appeared this year on the Estimates although no successor had been appointed?

THE SECRETARY (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): No definite arrangements have yet been made; but the alterations necessary in the Office are now under the consideration of the Treasury. With reference to the further Question of my hon. Friend the Member for Preston, I may say that the post held by the late Mr.

Michel has not yet been filled up, pending the re-arrangement of the Office generally. For the same reason the active publication of the arrears of abridgment was stopped, as both these questions largely depended upon the Report of Lord Herschell's Committee on the Patent Office, of which I was a Member. The alterations necessary upon the Report of that Committee are, as I have already stated, under the consideration of the Treasury. The necessary amount is provided for in the Estimates, but has not been expended.

MR. HANBURY asked how long this had been going on?

BARON HENRY DE WORMS said, he could not say without making inquiry.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR asked, Was the Treasury responsible?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.) said, he could not admit that the Treasury was responsible for anything.

VENEZUELA — SEIZURE OF THE BRITISH SHIPS "HENRIETTA" AND "JOSEPHINE."

MR. WATT (Glasgow, Camlachie) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether the Government have yet decided what means to adopt so as to secure from Venezuela the indemnity decided upon as due to the owners of the two British vessels improperly seized by Venezuelan officials several years ago; whether the Government have been made aware of the fact that property valued at £750,000, belonging to British subjects, has been confiscated by the Government of Venezuela since the suspension of diplomatic relations; and, whether the Government will intimate to the Government of Venezuela that they will be held responsible for all acts of spoliation of property belonging to British subjects?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): It is unusual and inconvenient to state in advance what measures Her Majesty's Government may deem it expedient to take. No information has reached Her Majesty's Government of any such action on the part of the Venezuelan Government as that implied in the Question?

VENEZUELA AND BRITISH GUIANA—THE BOUNDARY QUESTION.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, Camlachie) asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether the Government are in possession of information to the effect that the President of Venezuela has asked for, and been declined, the intervention of the United States of America; and, whether he had accordingly sailed for Europe, so as to endeavour to secure the intervention of His Majesty the King of the Belgians, in the dispute now pending between British Guiana and Venezuela, with reference to boundary?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.) (who replied) said: In reply to an offer of the United States Government of their good offices to promote a settlement of the dispute between Her Majesty's Government and that of Venezuela with regard to the boundary line between that country and British Guiana, they were informed that the attitude which had been taken up by General Blanco in regard to the question at issue precluded Her Majesty's Government from submitting it at the present moment to the arbitration of any third Power. Her Majesty's Government have no information as to the intentions of General Guzman Blanco.

WAR OFFICE—REGIMENTAL BANDS AT PUBLIC MEETINGS.

CAPTAIN COTTON (Cheshire, Wirral) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether it be the case that a General Order was issued on the 3rd instant, forbidding regimental bands to play out of their own districts; and, whether it be the case that the band of the Grenadier Guards was permitted to play on the 17th and 18th instants at the Flower Show at Shrewsbury; and, if so, why?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): An Order was issued on the 2nd instant forbidding regimental bands to play out of their military districts without special permission from headquarters. The band of the Grenadier Guards played at the Shrewsbury Flower Show on the date named under a misconception of this Order, and believing that they had authority to do so under a previous permission. Orders have now been issued making it quite clear that permissions granted anterior to August 2 are cancelled.

HIGHWAY ACTS — THE SALVATION ARMY — RELIGIOUS SERVICES AT STAMFORD.

MR. A. M'ARTHUR (Leicester) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether it is a fact that the religious services in Stamford were held in a square, and could not be regarded as obstructing any public thoroughfare?

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.) also asked the right hon. Gentleman, Whether he has come to any decision with respect to the persons now undergoing imprisonment in Leicester Gaol for obstructing the highway by holding religious rervices in the Market Square of Stamford on Sunday evenings?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): The Salvation Army services in Stamford were held in a public square. The magistrates held that square to be a "highway" within the Highway Act, and found that it had, in fact, been obstructed. I see in the newspapers to-day that an appeal by way of special case has been lodged against this decision, and the defendants have, I understand, been liberated meanwhile. I have telegraphed to ask if this is the fact, but have not yet received a reply. If it is, pending such an appeal, I ought not to express any opinion on the point of law involved, or on the sentences.

PIERS AND HARBOURS (IRELAND)—PIER AT MALIN HEAD, COUNTY DONEGAL.

MR. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, with reference to the pier at Milan Head, County Donegal, What has been the cost of constructing the 30 feet extension to the original design of the pier; what the extra flight of steps cost; what has been the cost of the "toeing blocks" which were put down along the wharf wall and the sea wall, in order to protect the foundation of the structure; what is the estimated cost of the rock cutting under water adjacent to the pier head; what engineering expenses have been incurred during the progress of the work; what surplus (if any) yet remains of the original Estimate, £10,000, the original contract being taken at £7,765 14*s.* 11*d.*; and, whether it is the intention of the Board of Works to expend any surplus which may yet remain in further deepening the harbour inside to the depth of low water at spring tides?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.), in reply, said, the cost of the extension was £1,140; of the extra flight of steps, £60; of the blocks, £400; of the rock cutting, £280; of the engineering expense, £297. There was no surplus.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—THE POLICE AT KANTURK.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If he would state what authority there is for the statement that upon the occasion on which Head Constable Horgan, of Kanturk, and other constables forced their way into the private grounds of Father Collins, that it was intended to hold a public meeting there; what authority is there for the statement that some people present carried pitchforks; if he is aware that, on the occasion in question, the reverend gentleman, whilst protesting against the entrance of the constables into his private grounds, offered to conduct them to a spot outside those grounds, but within a few yards distance, from whence they could hear and see any proceedings which might take place, but the Head Constable refused the offer, and insisted upon entrance; and, whether, in view of all these circumstances, he will grant a local inquiry into the conduct of the policemen?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. GIBSON) (Liverpool, Walton) (who replied) said, the statements alluded to were made on the authority of the Divisional Magistrate after full investigation. A turbulent crowd proceeded to the place of meeting, and the Rev. Mr. Collins asked the police to stay outside the grounds; but the police constables preferred to go inside the grounds, believing that a meeting was to be held.

MR. FLYNN: If I can assure the right hon. and learned Gentleman that no meeting was about to be held, and if I can assure him that the crowd was not turbulent, will he look into the matter?

MR. GIBSON: I have already told the hon. Gentleman that we have made an inquiry, and what the result of the inquiry is.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I wish to ask the right hon. and learned Gentleman if the whole affiair was not this —that the Member for the Division accepted an invitation to dine with the parish priest, and the town band played him to the parish priest's house; and what right the police had, under such circumstances, to intrude themselves on private premises without a warrant?

MR. GIBSON: It is perfectly plain that the police on the spot did not adopt that view.

MR. SEXTON: Had they a warrant?

MR. FLYNN: Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman aware that the Member for the Division—that is myself—asked the Head Constable if he had a warrant, and, under the circumstances, what authority he had to intrude on private premises; and, furthermore, if the Head Constable was asked by myself on the occasion what information he had that any meeting whatever was going to be held on the night in question?

MR. GIBSON said, he could not answer as to the conversation between the hon. Member and the Head Constable. But a warrant was not necessary.

MR. FLYNN: On account of the unsatisfactory answer of the right hon. and learned Gentleman, I beg to give Notice that I will call full attention to the matter when the Estimates come to be discussed.

PALACE OF WESTMINSTER — THE CRYPT UNDER THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

MR. P. O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.) asked the First Commissioner of Works, When the Crypt of the House of Commons will be open for inspection by the public?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER (Mr. PLUNKET) (Dublin University): I have communicated on this subject with the Home Office; and I am informed that the police authorities do not consider that the time has yet come when the crypt of the House of Commons can be safely opened to the public.

MR. P. O'BRIEN asked, whether the right hon. Gentleman would consider the advisability of allowing Members of the House with their friends, if they wished, to see the crypt? [*Cries of* "No, no!" *and* an IRISH MEMBER: Why?]

MR. PLUNKET said, if hon. Members expressed a wish to see the crypt he would consult the authorities on the subject.

POST OFFICE (SCOTLAND)—THE CALEDONIAN CANAL.

DR. CLARK (Caithness) asked the Postmaster General, Whether the through postal communication along the line of the Caledonian Canal, between Inverness and Fort William, is broken by a distance of 16 miles (between Invergarry and Spean Bridge), whereby persons along the route cannot intercommunicate without an interval of several days; whether numerous petitions have, from time to time, been sent from the inhabitants to have this state of matters remedied; whether it is the practice for the Post Office, in estimating the Revenue from the remoter districts in the Highlands, to count only the letters carried out from the post office, and not to count those carried to it; whether they only allow a halfpenny for each letter instead of 1*d*., and only 1*d*. for every parcel whatever its weight; whether over five miles of this gap of 16 miles—namely, between Spean Bridge and Glengloy, the Post Office refuses to supply postal communication unless the cost is guaranteed by private individuals; whether 9,000 letters are carried to the post office, and as many carried from this district in a year, while the whole cost of the service is only 10*s*. a-week; whether the carriage of letters from Invergarry Post Office, Inverness-shire (the only post office serving the surrounding district of upwards of 100 square miles), to Achnacarry, a distance of eight miles direct, occupies about 48 hours; whether these letters are sent by a circuitous route of about 180 miles; and, whether letters from Invergarry to Paris are delivered as soon as letters from Invergarry to Achnacarry, a distance of eight miles?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): The facts stated by the hon. Member are substantially correct; but he has omitted to state that during the summer months, when the steamers are running, direct postal communication between Inverness and Fort William is maintained. There is a difficulty about maintaining such communication in the months when the steamers are not running, as the amount of correspondence is too trifling to warrant any increased expenditure in the way of additional mail carts. It has, therefore, been necessary to have recourse for the local letters to the circuitous route *viâ* Inverness and Kingussie, for correspondence emanating from Invergarry and other adjacent places. But I shall be glad to consider whether some economical system of post may not, under the special circumstances, be established.

IRELAND—THE PROCLAMATION OF THE NATIONAL LEAGUE—ADMINISTRATION OF THE CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDURE (IRELAND) ACT, 1887.

MR. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether it is true, as stated in *The Times* of the 24th August, that he had an interview in Dublin Castle, on Tuesday the 23rd instant, with Irish Divisional Magistrates, who are entrusted with the administration of the Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act; whether it is true, as stated in the same paper, that full information was received from the magistrates as to the state of their respective localities, and that their opinions were elicited as to the probable effects of the Crimes Act; and, whether it is in accordance with Constitutional usage that the Chief Minister of the Crown in Ireland should seek interviews, obtain full information, and sound the opinions of persons discharging judicial functions, with reference to matters coming, or likely to come, before them in their judicial capacity?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): I cannot admit the right of the hon. Gentleman to ask me Questions as to interviews I may have had with persons in Ireland in the discharge of my official duties; but I can re-assure the hon. Gentleman on one point. He appears to be of opinion that Divisional Magistrates are entrusted with the administration of the Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act; but there are no judicial functions assigned to them.

MR. MAC NEILL asked, whether not only Divisional Magistrates but Resident Magistrates were present at the interview; whether that interview lasted from 2 o'clock till 5; and whether the Lord Lieutenant was also present?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: As I have already informed the hon. Member, that is not the kind of Question that ought to be put to me. At all events, it is not the kind of Question I feel bound to answer.

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.) asked why, if these Divisional Magistrates had no judicial authority, they were called magistrates, and paid out of the sum voted for the Magistracy in Ireland?

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): Has the right hon. Gentleman any objection to state whether he conferred not only with Divisional Magistrates, but also with ordinary Resident Magistrates with regard to the Proclamation of the League?

[No reply.]

NORTH SEA FISHERIES—DISTURBANCES AT OSTEND—PROTECTION OF BRITISH FISHERMEN.

SIR HENRY TYLER (Great Yarmouth) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether he has received any information in regard to the disturbances reported to have occurred at Ostend; and, whether any steps have been taken for the protection of British fishermen and other subjects at that port?

MR. CAVENDISH BENTINCK (Whitehaven) asked, whether Her Majesty's Government had taken, or were about to take, any adequate steps to obtain compensation for the injuries to British fishing belonging to the East Coast?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.) (who replied) said: Her Majesty's Minister at Brussels has sent the substance of a Report by Mr. Vice Consul Thellusson, of Ostend, on the disturbances referred to, which corresponds substantially with the reports in the newspapers. Lord Vivian, on being made acquainted with the circumstances, at once brought the facts to the knowledge of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who assured him that measures would be promptly taken to prevent a recurrence of the disturbances, and for the protection of British fishermen in the exercise of what His

Excellency admitted to be their undoubted right, to sell their fish in the Belgian market. In answer to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Whitehaven (Mr. Cavendish Bentinck), I have formerly explained to the House that it is not within the function of the Public Prosecutor or the Government of a foreign country—of Belgium, for example — to procure compensation for damage done. That compensation may be obtained by a civil action; and the law of Belgium provides unusual facilities for recovery of such damages, seeing that it allows the civil suit to be brought by the aggrieved parties before the same Court which has tried the matter criminally.

MR. CAVENDISH BENTINCK said, his Question was, whether the Government would insist on compensation being paid?

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: I think the House will see that it is not for Her Majesty's Government to seek for compensation diplomatically when that remedy can be readily obtained by the ordinary course of law.

MR. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.): As arising out of the Question and answers, I should like to ask whether there is any foundation for the allegation that fish brought here, whether in British or in foreign ships, is liable to duty?

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: I have a Memorandum from my hon. Friend the Secretary to the Board of Trade in case this Question was asked, and as regards the United Kingdom no Customs duties are levied on the import of fish, whether in British or foreign vessels; but dues are levied in many ports and harbours for the support of such harbours. But no favour or exemption is shown to fish brought in British boats as regards these dues.

INDIA (BOMBAY)—SALE OF SPIRITS.

MR. ROWNTREE (Scarborough) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether any means have been taken to bring the statement contained in the despatch from the Bombay Government to the Secretary of State for India, of the 22nd April, 1887 — namely, "that Government would regard a 'genuine movement in favour of temperance with satisfaction," to the knowledge of the Natives in those districts where spirits are retailed by Government contractors?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JOHN GORST) (Chatham): The extent and manner of making known the opinions of the Government of Bombay to the Natives of that Province must be left to the discretion of that Government; but the Question of the hon. Member will, no doubt, bring the matter to the knowledge of the Natives referred to.

WAR OFFICE (ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT)—DEFECTIVE BAYONETS.

MR. HANBURY (Preston) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether it is the fact that the bayonets belonging to a battalion of the Lincolnshire Regiment, and which were supposed to be serviceable weapons, have recently been examined at Grantham, and found in many cases defective; what was the number so examined; and, what were the results?

THE SURVEYOR GENERAL OF ORDNANCE (Mr. NORTHCOTE) (Exeter) (who replied) said: The 4th Battalion of the Lincolnshire Regiment is a Militia battalion, whose bayonets, as stated by the Secretary of State for War on the 18th of April, are in process of re-testing. At Grantham, of 800 triangular bayonets examined 512 were found serviceable, and 18 out of 31 sword-bayonets.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—CRIMINAL CASES AT THE SUMMER ASSIZES.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, How many criminal cases were tried in Ireland at the Summer Assizes, and in how many of them the Judges disapproved of the action of the juries; and, whether any Assize Court was adjourned, or the trial of any case postponed, in consequence of the withholding of evidence, the absence of witnesses, the refusal of juries to convict in proper cases, or any other impediment to the due administration of justice?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. GIBSON) (Liverpool, Walton) (who replied) said: As Notice of this Question was only put down yesterday evening, I am not able to answer the first paragraph as to the number of cases in which the Judges disapproved of the action of the jurors at the last Summer Assizes. I have, however, gleaned from the ordinary sources of information—namely, the newspapers—the following facts:—At Longford, in the case of a trial for homicide, there was an acquittal, on which Mr. Justice Murphy remarked strongly, saying the verdict was contrary to the evidence. Several cases were postponed on the application of the Crown in County Clare on the ground of the impossibility of a fair trial; and after several acquittals in the face of clear evidence in Kerry, Mr. Justice O'Brien, on the application of the Crown, postponed several cases, stating the jurors had not done their duty; that they had refused to convict in the clearest and most certain cases; and that, in his experience, no such example of unfaithfulness to duty had occurred on the part of jurors in any trial; and that it was well it should be understood so far as the machinery of justice was concerned for the protection of person and property and life in that county law was at an end.

Mr. SEXTON: Then the answer of the right and learned Gentleman amounts to this—that in the 32 counties of Ireland there was nothing of this kind except in those cases in Clare and Kerry, and one case in County Longford?

Mr. GIBSON: Those were all that I could get in time for the purpose of this answer; but it is quite likely that I will be able to give the hon. Gentleman a half-dozen others.

Mr. SEXTON: I wish to ask the Chief Secretary, in view of the pledge given some time ago in the House that specific details should be forthcoming with reference to this matter, whether, in the course of the debate this evening, he will lay before the House the specific cases that the Government have to produce?

Mr. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): And I should like to ask, will the right hon. Gentleman take means to ascertain how many of these cases are due to the action of the National League?

Mr. EDWARD HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.): With reference to the case of Kerry, is the right hon. and learned Gentleman aware that in County Kerry at the Assizes, contrary to the ordinary practice in Ireland, the Crown did not exercise the right of "stand aside," or challenge; and that Mr. Adams, who represented several of the prisoners, said to the Crown Prosecutors, in the presence of the Judge in Court, that they rode for a fall, meaning thereby that they had ridden for the discredit of the jurors, by not excluding relations and connections, as it might be, of the persons accused?

Mr. GIBSON: I am aware that the Crown did not exercise the right of challenge, upon the ground that such challenge would be in operative, as all the jurors were practically of the same class. As regards the observations of my friend Mr. Adams, I am unable to say what he may have said in the discharge of his duty as the prisoner's counsel; but I am able to state—having read the paper this morning—that the learned Judge gave as his reason for acceding to the request of the Crown for a postponement that he had never seen such a disregard of duty on the part of jurors in any previous trial.

Mr. EDWARD HARRINGTON: May I ask whether it was by any previous concert that this method of no challenge was adopted by the Crown in Kerry?

Mr. GIBSON: It is hardly necessary to state to the House that the word "concert" has no application to the action of the Crown. The Crown counsel acted on their discretion on the spot, and the subsequent observations of the Judge, in my opinion, demonstrate that they acted wisely.

Mr. SEXTON: I must press the Chief Secretary, in view of his pledge, will he be good enough to say whether the Government intend, in the forthcoming debate, to allege specific cases?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): I have no details to give to the House—I gave no such pledge.

BANKRUPTCY ACT, 1883 — FOURTH REPORT OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL.

Mr. DIXON-HARTLAND (Middlesex, Uxbridge) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, When the Inspector General in Bankruptcy's Fourth Report will be issued; and, why it was not issued in June this year, as usual?

The SECRETARY (Baron Henry De Worms) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): The Fourth Report of the Board of

Trade, under Section 131 of the Bankruptcy Act, 1883, which includes the Report referred to by the hon. Member, was presented on Monday last, and will shortly be circulated. The Report of last year was not delivered until the 21st of September.

NORTH SEA FISHERIES — COLLISION OF AN OSTEND AND AN ENGLISH BOAT.

Mr. DIXON-HARTLAND (Middlesex, Uxbridge) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether, in the case of the *Belle of the Fleet*, Ramsgate boat, the master of the Ostend boat was fined £1 and sentenced to three days' imprisonment and to pay the whole costs; whether no damages were awarded by the Belgian Court to the owner of the British vessel; on what grounds, if the captain of the Ostend boat was found guilty of having wilfully run into and injured the *Belle of the Fleet*, he was not ordered to make good the damage and loss incurred by the British owners; and, what further steps he proposes to take in the matter?

Mr. WOOTTON ISAACSON (Tower Hamlets, Stepney) asked, whether the British seamen who gave evidence in the Belgian Court were each awarded the sum of one franc only for the trouble and inconvenience to which they were put?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Sir James Fergusson) (Manchester, N.E.): I have no information on that matter; but I can say, with regard to this inquiry, that several points seem to require further explanation, which has been asked for. In answer to the Question on the Paper, I may say that the master of the Ostend boat was condemned to pay a fine of 25 francs, with the alternative of three days' imprisonment, and to pay the costs. As to the question of damages being awarded, it rested with the owner of the *Belle of the Fleet* to make a claim for damages by a civil action at the same time and in the same Court in which the criminal proceedings were taken by the Public Prosecutor.

Mr. DIXON-HARTLAND: Is it not a practical denial of all justice that a poor man is expected to bring a civil action in a Belgian Court of Justice to obtain damages in a case like this?

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON: I can assure the House I have again and again inquired into the matter. The Belgian law seems to afford peculiar facilities for recovering debts in the way I have described; and I have always been surprised that these facilities are not embraced by our fishermen, and that Associations do not take advantage of the opportunity to bring civil actions in the way I have indicated.

TURKEY IN ASIA—OUTRAGE ON AN ENGLISH LADY AT ALEPPO.

Mr. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether the attention of Her Majesty's Government has been called to the outrage perpetrated last October upon an English lady in Aleppo by the dragoman of the Governor of Aleppo, and to the failure of the authorities there to have the offender brought to trial; and, whether the Government have taken, or are taking, any action in the matter, with a view to the protection of British subjects? He wished to add that the outrage was only brought to the notice of the Foreign Office last month.

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Sir James Fergusson) (Manchester, N.E.): No Report respecting this case seems to have been received. Last autumn the Porte sent a Special Commissioner to Aleppo to inquire into the conduct of Djemil Pasha, the Governor General, and he was removed to another post in consequence of the Commissioner's Report. Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople instructed the British Consul to bring to the notice of the Ottoman Commissioner any grievance and complaints of British subjects.

LAW AND JUSTICE (ENGLAND AND WALES) — SENTENCE ON MIRIAM JONES, CONVICTED OF ATTEMPTED CHILD MURDER.

Mr. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether a Petition addressed to him in favour of the commutation of the sentence of eight years' penal servitude passed upon Miriam Jones at the late Swansea Assizes was forwarded to the Home Office on the 8th instant, and its receipt acknowledged on the 18th instant; and, if so, whether the Petition has yet been brought to the knowledge of the Secretary of State?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.), in reply, said, that he had received several Petitions in favour of the commutation of the sentence.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND — ESTABLISHMENT FOR THE OFFICE.

GENERAL SIR GEORGE BALFOUR (Kincardine) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, If, on the re-assembling of Parliament, he will allow a Select Committee to be formed, composed mainly of Scotch Members, to inquire how far the large additional expenditure, stated by the Secretary to the Treasury to be about £11,300, for the newly created Office of Secretary for Scotland and Education Department is justifiable by its usefulness to Scotland, as to the advisability of transferring some of the expenditure hitherto provided under Votes 14 and 16, Class III., to the Secretary for Scotland's Vote, and as to the possibility of meeting the whole extra expenditure of about £11,800 for the Secretary for Scotland by economies out of the other Scotch Votes; and, generally, to inquire into the position and duties in and out of Parliament of the Lord Advocate and the Solicitor General for Scotland in relation to the Secretary for Scotland?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): It will be the duty of the Government to consider most carefully what establishment for carrying out the work of the Secretary for Scotland's Office shall be granted; but the Government do not think it right that they should delegate their responsibility to a Committee of the House. It will be for the House to consider the proposal which the Government may make next Session.

THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION — APPOINTMENT OF MR. W. J. COURTHOPE.

MR. T. E. ELLIS (Merionethshire) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether Mr. W. J. Courthope, who has been appointed third Civil Service Commissioner at a salary of £1,200 a-year, has till now been a Junior Examiner in the Education Department; what are his special qualifications for the important post to which he has been appointed; whether any of the Commissioners have any special acquaintance with science or mathematics, in which subjects it is their duty to direct examinations; and, whether it is the case that up to the present time Mr. Courthope has been one of the editors of a Conservative periodical called *The National Review*; and, if so, whether he will be permitted to continue in that post?

MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) asked, whether there was any Regulation, statutory or other, which precluded Civil servants from editing any political paper?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I have had no Notice of the last Question, and I cannot answer it. Mr. W. J. Courthope has been a junior in the Education Department. These examiners are specially selected from those who have taken high honours at the Universities, and Mr. Courthope obtained at Oxford, in 1863, a first-class in classical moderations, and in 1865 a first-class in the Final Classical Schools. He also obtained the Newdigate Prize for English verse in 1864, and the Chancellor's Prize for the English essay in 1868. These honours, and also the result of inquiries I made, were quite sufficient to satisfy me that Mr. Courthope was specially fitted for the post for which he was selected. I am not aware what special acquaintance the Civil Service Commissioners have with science and mathematics, which are only two out of many subjects in which they have to direct examinations. These examinations are conducted under the superintendence of an eminent staff of examiners, and no complaint has ever been made that the papers set in either of these subjects are of too easy a nature. If the hon. Member has any doubts on the subject the Commissioners would, I am sure, be glad to send him a few of their examination papers. Mr. Courthope resigned the joint editorship of *The National Review* on being informed of his appointment.

MR. T. E. ELLIS asked, whether any one of the Commissioners had taken a degree either in mathematics or science?

MR. W. H. SMITH: I really do not know; and I have already stated that these are only two of the many subjects in which the Commissioners have to direct examinations. It is not reasonable or desirable that they should be called upon to take a degree in every subject in which they have to direct examinations.

ALLOTMENTS BILL.

Mr. H. GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether it was his intention to bring the debate on the Proclamation of the National League to a close at a convenient hour this evening, with the view of making effective progress with the Allotments Bill?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): The debate will, I suppose, be adjourned at the usual hour at which such debates are adjourned; and, having regard to the period of the Session, I do not doubt that hon. Gentlemen who take a great interest in the Bill, as I know the hon. Member does, will be content to sit for a couple of hours in order to make progress with it.

Mr. CHANNING (Northampton, E.) said, that the right hon. Gentleman must be aware that there was a very large number of serious questions in connection with the Bill that could not be discussed at a late hour; and he wished to appeal to him to make an effort to bring the debate to a close a little earlier than was usual, so that they might really get one English question discussed adequately this Session.

Mr. W. H. SMITH: I do not doubt that there is a strong desire on the part of English Members to discuss this question adequately, and I am certain that they do not want to discuss it more than adequately. The Government will endeavour to find ample opportunity for that adequate discussion, and I shall not be justified in interfering with the debate this evening at too early an hour.

CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDURE (IRELAND) ACT, 1887—PROCLAMATION OF THE NATIONAL LEAGUE—THE IRISH PRIVY COUNCIL.

Mr W. A. MACDONALD (Queen's Co., Ossory) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he would inform the House how the Members of the Privy Council in Dublin were summoned to its meetings; whether they were summoned in the usual manner on the occasion of the recent Proclamations; and, if so, how we are to account for the fact that out of the 53 Members constituting the Privy Council only two were present, in addition to the Lord Lieutenant; whether he adhered to the statement he made on Friday last, that the Privy Council were not consulted before the Proclamation was issued; whether that is not in direct contravention of the terms of the Statute, which provides that an Association shall be declared to be dangerous only by and with the advice of the Privy Council; and, whether this irregularity does not render the Proclamation invalid?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): I am not acquainted with the method by which the Privy Council is summoned. I have no doubt whatever that the ordinary practice was followed in the case alluded to. I do not know why not more than two Members of the Council were present; but, of course, it is habitual for the work of the Privy Council to be carried on by a very small portion of that body, especially at a time of year like the present, when a great number are absent. The hon. Gentleman asks me whether I adhere to the statement made by me, that the Privy Council were not consulted before the Proclamation was issued? Yes, Sir; I do adhere to that statement. The hon. Member asks whether that is not in direct contravention of the terms of the Act, which provides that an Association shall be declared dangerous only by and with the advice of the Privy Council? The advice is given by the Members of the Privy Council present attaching their signatures to the document; and the hon. Member concludes by asking whether this irregularity does not render the Proclamation invalid. No, Sir; it does not.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): Can the right hon. Gentleman state whether a notice was sent to the right hon. John Morley, who is one of Her Majesty's Irish Privy Councillors?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The hon. and learned Gentleman had better address that Question to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Would it be in Order for me, Mr. Speaker, to take the advice of the Chief Secretary, and put a Question to a private Member?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order! The First Lord of the Treasury.

MOTIONS.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

Ordered, That the Orders of the Day be postponed until after the Notice of Motion relating to the Special Proclamation as to the Association known as the Irish National League.—(*Mr. William Henry Smith.*)

IRISH NATIONAL LEAGUE (SPECIAL PROCLAMATION).

MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): I rise, Sir, according to Notice, to move the following Resolution which stands on the Notice Paper in my name:—

> "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, humbly to represent to Her Majesty that there has been laid before this House a Special Proclamation of the Viceroy of Ireland declaring the Association known as the Irish National League to be a dangerous Association, under the Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act, 1887; that no information has been furnished to Parliament to justify the issue of the said Special Proclamation, by virtue of which Her Majesty's subjects are liable to be punished as criminals without judicial inquiry into the nature of their acts; and that this House, in the absence of such information, prays that the said Proclamation shall not continue in force as to the Association named and described therein."

I hope there will be no misapprehension in the House as to the nature of the function which we have to discharge to-day. It is a function imposed upon us by the act of the whole Legislature. An act of great importance, undoubtedly, which we, many of us, think to be an act of great violence, but an act of great importance has been performed by the Executive Government. That act, according to the law of the land, cannot be their act alone. The action of Parliament, whether in a negative or in a substantive form, must not be withheld. At this moment the action of Parliament is as essential, in the view of the law with respect to this Proclamation, as the action of the Executive itself. The Executive takes a solemn decision. It then introduces that solemn decision to our notice. We are called upon either to give or not to give an opinion upon it. For my own part, and for those who may think with me, I have expressed that opinion, I hope, clearly in the Motion upon the Paper. If no opinion be given upon the Proclamation the Proclamation comes to be the Proclamation of this House just as truly and substantially as it is the Proclamation of the Government. That is the reason why reference is made in the Statute to this House, that the House may become a party to it by the silence of approval, or by such comment or objection as the House may choose to make. Well now, Sir, in this particular Proclamation the Viceroy of Ireland declares, by and with the advice and consent of his Privy Council, that he is satisfied that the association known as the National League in Ireland is an association which incites to acts of violence and intimidation—I think those are the words. Sir, we do not and cannot possibly suppose that this conclusion of the Viceroy thus announced is a conclusion arbitrarily arrived at. It is necessarily founded upon information. It is impossible that the Viceroy should not have consulted—in fact, it would be the grossest breach of his duty if he had not consulted the best, the most authoritative sources of information, the largest number of those whose duty it is to supply him with information upon the state of the country; and upon that information we must take it for granted that this important conclusion of the Viceroy has been founded. Now, Sir, where is that information? We have a right to ask for it. We have a right to that information. The Statute has put upon us the duty of becoming parties to the act of the Government. Was it the intention of the Statute that when the House of Commons was to become a party to the act of the Government, or was to pass judgment upon it, it was to do so without being possessed of the means of forming a judgment? I assume it to be a matter that requires no argument, and that bears no argument. I assert that if we are associated with the Government when it comes to an important conclusion, we have a title to know the grounds upon which that conclusion has been arrived at, in order that our judgment may be supported and justified by this information in the same manner as the Government believe that their judgment is supported and justified by such information. Well, Sir, the Government have been asked whether they intend to give us information in order to enable us to discharge our duty, and they have refused. I suppose there is no doubt at all that I am accurate in making that statement. Now, it is not for us to be led blindfolded to a decision upon this matter. It is for us to claim that we shall be supplied with the means of action; and if these means of action are withheld from us, then I say there are three propositions which we must immediately urge upon the House and the Government in consequence. In the first place, it is a slight—I may almost say an outrage—upon the dignity of Parliament to suppose that it is to discharge a statutory duty of this importance without being in possession of the grounds upon which alone the discharge of that duty can properly be founded in the face of the country. In the second place, it reduces to utter destruction, to utter absurdity, the main contention of the Government put forward at the time when we were discussing the Coercion Act under which this Proclamation is issued. When the Government were pressed with the unquestionable fact that this is a wider and more searching and far-reaching Act than ever has been passed with a view to the restraint of private action in Ireland — [*Ministerial cries of* "No!"] I answer "Yes." I am very familiar with that method of interruption, and treat it with as much respect as it deserves. But it is not necessary for me to make the assertion with regard to the Act as a whole. The assertion was made with regard to the Act as a whole; but of course it had reference specially to the most salient point of the Act—to the 6th and 7th sections of the Act in particular. It was pointed out that though undoubtedly this is a very unusual method of proceeding—a proceeding wholly without precedent—I think no negative to that can be ventured, even by the boldest of silent Members, yet we were called upon to observe the peculiar and effective safeguards under which it was placed. What were those safeguards? They were two. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant (Mr. A. J. Balfour) had the courage to refer to the fact that the provisions of the Act were largely or generally dependent upon the discretion of the Government who applied them—that is to say, upon his own discretion. It required some courage to place that before the House as being in the nature of a safeguard which we were to take into our view as of appreciable weight. But there was a second and a greater safeguard, and that safeguard was the action of the Government under the 6th and 7th clauses, the most vital, perhaps, and the most far-reaching of all the clauses in the Act. That action was to be subject to the concurrence, to the review of Parliament. But what, Sir, is the value of the concurrence of Parliament, what is the meaning of the review of Parliament, if the vote of this House is to be a vote given blindfolded, given in ignorance of facts, given under circumstances under which the Government daringly refuse to make known to us the very grounds of their act which the statutory authority has required us to perform and sanction? Therefore, these safeguards have proved to be a farce—a farce, and nothing less than a farce. I want to know what is the value of the approval of this House given in the dark? I want to know whether it is not an approval given in the dark if the information upon which the proceedings of the Government have been founded is to be kept secret, if that information is to be withheld? I hope I shall not be told that there are various Papers on the Table of the House with respect to Ireland which will show to me that, for a long time past, there have been a number of persons subjected to the painful process termed Boycotting, and a number of persons in Ireland subjected to the protection, and, of course, necessarily annoying protection, of the police. These are the facts which, no doubt, have been before us for months and for years. If these are the facts upon which you are to justify these proceedings, why did you come to us for a discretionary power; why did you not ask us, in the regular and Constitutional method, to proclaim, denounce, and prohibit the action of the National League when the Statute was passing through Parliament? Why did you not do that which Sir Robert Peel and the Duke of Wellington did in 1829, who, when they deemed the Roman Catholic Association to be an association injurious to peace and good order in Ireland, asked

Parliament to prohibit the action and existence of that association? I do not think that following times have greatly favoured the justness of their conclusion; but nobody can doubt the propriety of their method. Why was not that course taken in the present instance? It was obviously the duty of Her Majesty's Government, if they had a case for the prohibition of the National League, to ask Parliament to concur with them in that prohibition in a regular manner by enacting it by Statute. So much, then, for safeguards. The safeguards, be it understood, have disappeared—they are absolutely null. Be the rest of the case what it may, no man will tell me that the mere action of a Party majority in this House, not founded upon information supplied for the purpose of enabling it to form its judgment, is a safeguard and not a delusion. It is a delusion practised upon the country, and is as little creditable to the Parliament who enacted it as to the Government who proposed it. So much for these two propositions with regard to the information that is withheld from us on this important occasion. There is a third proposition not less material and weighty than that to which I have already referred, and that is this—What are we to think of the information which those who have it know will not bear the light? Remember what has been the great controversy between us during most of the debates of this year. You have professed to legislate against crime, while we have contended that you were legislating against combination apart from crime. We have now come to the occasion when, if you had a case to produce, it was alike your duty and your interest to produce it; and to show that the combinations you are legislating against are combinations which issue in a crime. You shrink from the test. You decline our challenge, although we have as much title to know on what grounds you are proceeding as you yourselves have. It is impossible not to arrive at any other conclusion than this—that you yourselves know that the information which you withhold is information which will show that your proceedings are in effect proceedings against combination which does not issue in crime. Well, Sir, so much for the question of information. But what follows? What is the light thrown by this manner of proceeding upon the nature and provisions of the Act we have been passing, and particularly upon the nature of these 6th and 7th clauses, by which it was deliberately decided to deprive Irishmen, within the liberal and large limits assigned by the 2nd clause, of the protection afforded them by judicial inquiry? The issue of it all is this—that as the concurrence of Parliament is reduced to a mere form—I am afraid I might say a mere imposture—the action of the Government, according to the view of the Government, is to be a sole action; and, being so, what I affirm is this—that this Bill in these particular sections, so viewed and so interpreted—and, in my opinion, such an interpretation is a great and mischievous aggravation of the Bill—is a new form of suspending the Habeas Corpus Act. Yes, Sir; it is a new form of suspending the Habeas Corpus Act; it is in essence the same, in exterior shape it is somewhat different, but not, perhaps, an improvement. The meaning of the Acts which have been passed for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act is this—that the discretion of the Executive is substituted for judicial inquiry with reference to the liberty of the subject. That is the essence, and with respect to that central provision and substance of the matter the action of this Act is precisely the same—when the concurrence of Parliament in this Proclamation has been reduced to idle form by its being deprived of all judicial character, the essence of this Act becomes exactly the same as the measures for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. In the shape of the enactments I admit there is a difference, because in the case of the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Acts you have a power of imprisonment undefined in its length further than it may be defined by the fact of such Bills being necessarily odious and un-Constitutional, whereas this Act has been deemed to be so great a blessing to Ireland that it has been deemed unjust to assign beforehand any limited period during which she is to enjoy it. What have we got to substitute for the discretionary power of the Executive in those Acts in the present Act? In the present Act we have an apparent trial, with a summary jurisdiction of imprisonment for six months. Is that an improvement? Is that apparent trial an advantage? Why do I call it an apparent trial? Because, although it has the exterior of a trial, inasmuch as the fact must be affirmed before a judicial tribunal, yet the law, the nature of the acts done, the character of the association, the substance or the emptiness, and futility of the allegations of the Government are entirely withheld from the cognizance of any Court of Justice whatever. And when my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Hackney (Sir Charles Russell) endeavoured to secure that there should be something like a judicial concurrence, at any rate, of these Resident Magistrates in the judgment arrived at by the Lord Lieutenant that was refused by the Government, and nothing is left to the Court of Summary Jurisdiction but the simple recognition of the fact that a meeting of the National League was held when a certain person was present at it, or that an advertisement appeared in some newspaper friendly to the general purposes of Nationalism, or something else of that kind. Why, Sir, what kind of trial is this? It is, as it appears to me, identical in substance with what the Law of Libel was in this country before the time of Mr. Fox, when what you had to do was to prove the fact of publication, and when the fact of publication was proved the character of the publication was altogether withheld from the cognizance of the jury. Now, how do you look back upon that period—the introduction of the Court of Justice as little better than a mockery and a delusion and a snare, to use the language of Lord Denman—when the essence of the thing was withheld from judicial cognizance? When you were giving the Viceroy the whole substance, you might as well, perhaps, have given him the shell too. At any rate, this apparent trial may have the effect of deluding superficial observers into the idea that the case has been judicially handled, when, in point of fact, it has been determined exclusively, to all substantial intents and purposes, in the chambers of the Viceroy of Ireland. I think that that is a state of things which is hardly creditable in a country in which liberty is valued as highly as it is here, and which has lately widened very largely its securities for liberty by calling in the popular judgment on a scale hitherto unprecedented. The libertie of the people in one of the Three Kingdoms are to be committed to a jurisdiction unprecedented in our annals, unknown to our history; and that upon a scale, and in a manner, of which tyranny, even in former times, had never formed the brilliant conception. The arbitrary will of the Government is to be substituted for the regular action of the law. This principle of assumption instead of law is a principle most dangerous—I think most disgraceful—to be enacted in any country, most of all to be enacted in Ireland. There is no country whose claim to be treated with the strictest legality, and with the strictest observance of the higher principles of the Constitution, is so strong as that of Ireland; because there is no other country in which for such lengthened periods law has been made to assume the form of an outrage upon the people. Unfortunately, we all know very well that this has not been simply in ancient times. We all know very well that a great wrong has been inflicted upon the people of Ireland by the Acts of the Imperial Parliament. All of us, at least the great bulk of us—a large and increasing proportion of us—who sit on this side of the House are of opinion that nothing could be more grossly unjust than the manner in which, by Acts of the Imperial Parliament, the whole law of tenure and the recovery of rent was completely reconstituted in the earlier years of this century against the tenant and in favour of the landlord. We know—at least, I believe we know—that there never was a grosser act of injustice—though I do not believe it was unjustly intended, but that is quite another matter—there never was a grosser act of injustice perpetrated by the Legislature than when in the Constitution of the Encumbered Landed Estates Court we not only enabled but encouraged by our solemn sanction the encumbered landlords of Ireland to sell the improvements they had not made to people who were to give value for them, knowing that the value was to go into the pocket of the outgoing landlord, and the incoming landlord, who would pay for it, was naturally expecting it would be repaid to him in an increased rent. I might go later down. I might make an appeal to the Treasury Bench in relation to the Habeas Corpus Act of 1881, which I have heard this year censured by my and humane influence in that behalf? I shall quote testimonies in its favour that cannot be contradicted—testimonies of persons who cannot be accused of undue friendliness to its principles, or even to its objects. Now, Sir, I shall quote only two of those testimonies—one of them is the evidence of Sir Redvers Buller, to which, in these new and unparalleled circumstances, it becomes necessary to revert. When Sir Redvers Buller was asked by Lord Milltown as to the general sympathy with the action of the League, Sir Redvers Buller replied—"Yes; I think there is sympathy, because they think it has been their salvation." That is the statement in the evidence of Sir Redvers Buller. I have seen various editions of the evidence of Sir Redvers Buller. One of those editions contained an expression of concurrence in that view and sympathy with that view which is apparent in every line of that evidence of Sir Redvers Buller. In answering a further question, he said—

> "The tenants in the West part of Ireland told me of rents that have been reduced and evictions that have been stayed which is directly due to the operation of the League. They believe that, whatever truth there may be in it."

Then he goes on, without any interposition of words, to say that he is merely quoting the opinions of others. He goes on to say—

> "Nobody did anything for the tenants until the League was established; and when the landlords could not let their farms, then they were forced to consider the question of rent."

How does this evidence stand by the side of other testimony borne in this House by a very able Member of this House—the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell)—whose private opinions and leanings I have no power to estimate, but with respect to whom, listening with much admiration to his able speeches, I must own I think that if there be any man who must be wholly exempt from the charge in whole or in part of any kind of sympathy with Irish Nationalists in Ireland or in this House, the Member for South Tyrone appears to be that man. Were I entitled to assume the character of a critic, I might even say that there is a little more than the absence of sympathy; but, at any rate, it is enough for me to establish the character of the hon. Member as a witness in this House. I am going to quote language of the hon. Gentleman, and he will correct me if I am wrong, as to the substance of a very recent declaration of his—uncontradicted, so far as I know, in any quarter of the House. The substance of it was this. The hon. Member said that in Leinster, Munster, and Connaught, the three Provinces of Ireland, I think he said, in which outrage and intimidation had done their work, there had been reduction; in Ulster there had not been outrage and intimidation, and there had been no reduction.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): I said little or no reduction.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: I beg pardon—little or no reduction—I wish to quote accurately; but I was not very far from the mark. Well, Sir, the meaning is this—he has indicated three Provinces of Ireland in which there have been reductions, and those three Provinces have been the Provinces in which there has been effective action of the League. Do not suppose that I am stating these facts with respect to the National League for the purpose of insinuating that the League is to be allowed to do what it likes. Nothing of the sort. But what I am contending is this. That where there is a great association which, through a considerable part of Ireland, commands the confidence of the people, and where that association is, by the confession of witnesses, in some cases hostile and in others perfectly impartial and raised far above the reach of prejudice—where that association has been the means of conferring relief upon the tenantry of Ireland, relief which you, by your legislative acts, have admitted ought to be conferred—those are reasons strong and conclusive as if almost they were written in Holy Writ. My object is to show that in dealing with such an association you ought rigidly to adhere to the principles of law, and carefully to eschew the methods of arbitrary government and discretion. [*Ironical Ministerial cheers.*] You sneer, but you seem unconscious that my main position is this—that by the strained and unheard of construction which you give to the statutory declaration respecting the intervention of this House, you depart entirely from the principles of law; you become yourselves so far, not law-abiders, but law-breakers. You set a bad, a mischievous, and a dangerous lesson to the people of Ireland when, if you find the language of the Statute inconvenient and restrictive with reference to a licence of action, you are determined to make no more difficulties than some persons in some parts of Ireland have made in bending the language of that Statute to your purpose. Well, now, Sir, I am well aware that in dealing with this question we are not to re-argue the 6th and 7th sections. I am not re-arguing them. I have spoken entirely upon what appears to me to be their undeniable construction, if any Act of Parliament is capable of being read plainly, in a plain sense and meaning. I have spoken of war against the people of Ireland; but pray observe that you cast the net very wide. I believe the members of this League are counted by hundreds of thousands; but in the 7th clause you go beyond the members of the League. The League itself is to be unlawful; the assemblies of any of its members for its purposes are to be unlawful; to call or to share in them is to be unlawful; to publish, with a view to promoting them, is to be unlawful. These are curious words. I think if those words be thus construed they will apply to comments in a friendly newspaper on any of the proceedings of the League—not to *The Times* or *The Standard*, who will not be suspected of sympathy with those purposes, and will be exempt from this prosecution, because it will not be construed to be "with a view to promoting the purposes of the League;" but where the friendly newspaper inserts an advertisement or comments, without entirely condemning, where it points out that moneys have been received for the League, and that moneys will continue to be received for the League in such and such a place, I suppose that friendly newspaper will run a very slender chance indeed before the two Resident Magistrates. And, now, Sir, I may remind the House of a rather remarkable passage in a speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland—I think it was the speech in which he introduced the Crimes Act. He said that the Bill contained no clauses relating to the Press, but that it contained provisions—I am not quoting his exact words; he will correct me if I misrepresent their substance—but it contained provisions under which he thought it reasonable to hope that the conduct of the Press would be somewhat modified and restrained. No Press Clauses! Not for the world would this Government have the odium of Press Clauses; but it is a new and ingenious invention to avoid the odium of Press Clauses, and yet to introduce words into your Act under which at the sole discretion of the Executive Government persons writing upon the National League, with ever so qualified a favour of its purposes or with ever so candid a recognition of the real good which General Redvers Buller and the hon. Member for South Tyrone say that it has attained, will be liable to be brought before two Resident Magistrates and to have their action qualified, modified, and restrained. Well, it appears to me that, viewing the matter as a whole, we are pressing the people of Ireland very hard. It is quite evident that it is intended to work the recent law by the method of summary jurisdiction, and the circuit of summary jurisdiction has accordingly been expanded, and the actions of which it can take cognizance have, according to Mr. Justice Holmes, been enlarged and increased. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland said it was very unfortunate that Mr. Justice Holmes had never been able to attend this House for the purpose of contradicting the account that had been given of his words. Yes, Sir; and what is a great deal more unfortunate still is that if he had attended this House he could not and would not have contradicted the account that was given of his words. I, for one, am perfectly ready to take my affidavit and make my deposition of having heard those words, and I am perfectly certain that Mr. Justice Holmes will not contradict them. Well, we have taken away from the people of Ireland within limits which we think sufficiently wide to make this summary jurisdiction an effective instrument for the working of the Act—we have taken away from them trial by jury. We have brought the whole law of association and the law affecting all those who belong to an association, or who in any way promote their purposes—for the words are as large as they can be—under the sole discretion of the Executive Government, just as much as if we had passed in plain and honest terms a suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. We have set up with this tribunal of summary jurisdiction and constituted it in a manner that was deemed to be safe; and now, even to this pet tribunal—even to these two Resident Magistrates—we will not allow any power of trying the nature of the acts done in connection with the proclaimed association for which they are to award six months' imprisonment. Sir, is not that pressing hard on the patience and spirit of endurance of the people? We will not allow them to judge. Of course, they cannot judge anything but the bare fact, which is of little or no consequence; but of the character of the act, its legality, or its spirit, they can pronounce no judgment; and finally we, the House of Commons, are absolutely shut out by the action, and I presume we shall be shut out by the declaration, of the Government from performing anything but an absolutely perfunctory operation in connection with the great responsibility laid upon us by the Statute. Our judgment is to be of no more worth than the nodding of a Chinese mandarin made in porcelain to convey our sanction to a measure or a proposition. This is going very low indeed. And most curiously, by the structure of the Act in this respect, even now we are not dealing with conclusive proceedings under it. Under the Proclamation itself nothing can be done. It is only indirectly that action can take place, and in virtue of that action the liberties of the people are to be sacrificed and trampled under the feet of the Executive Government. It is to be done by orders issued from time to time, and of these orders the House of Commons is not to have even the smallest cognizance. We are called upon to take cognizance of the Proclamation, which by itself does nothing, and that cognizance is reduced to a perfect farce. The whole of the operative proceedings under the Proclamation is reserved for the action of the Government of Ireland, without even the formal acknowledgment of our authority in the matter. The sword of Damocles is to hang over the heads of the Irish people. When we look to the sanction of the Act, there are no jury, no Judge, no Resident Magistrates, no control of Parliament; there is nothing but the absolute, unmitigated, arbitrary discretion of the Executive Government—of a political and necessarily a partizan Government. Well, will the Irish people bear the pressure that we are thus putting on their patience? I hope that they will, and I believe that they will. In my opinion, although the remains of former ill habits will necessarily be found in a country like Ireland, which has suffered so much and so long—although grievances may in the hands of those of the less instructed and less Christian-minded part of the population associate themselves with opportunity for the indulgence of evil passions—yet I rejoice to think that under recent pressure the conduct of the Irish people has testified to the great absence of all special and exceptional crime and to a great regard for and observance of the authority of the law. I trust, Sir, with all my heart, that that attitude will be continued; and if I may be permitted to offer them one syllable of recommendation, with all the earnestness that I can command, it is that it should be steadily continued. But what will be the motive that will come to reinforce other good motives in inducing the people to show respect for the law in Ireland under such trying circumstances as I have described in connection with the proceedings of the Legislature and also those of the Executive Government at this moment? If the Irish people suffer silently and obey, as I trust they will, they will not, I am sure, suffer and obey through fear. It will not be through fear of your Viceroys and your Chief Secretaries, nor through fear of your Proclamation and your orders issued from time to time. It will not be through fear. It will, on the contrary, be from the action of strong, vivid, and buoyant hope. The spirit of hope has come into the mind of Ireland within the last two years, and has become a great agent in determining its conduct. That spirit of hope was not effectually damped even at the General Election, when the Irish people saw that those to whose sympathy they looked had become a very small minority of this House. It subsisted under the darker circumstances of the last summer; it has become brighter and more lively. The Irish people believe that the policy of Her Majesty's Government is not the sense of the British nation. They know that the time and the opportunity must come—whether the majority of this House like it or whether they like it not—when that sense will be fully and authentically declared, and they are willing to trust to it and they are confident of its character.

They know likewise that under the operation of the law from time to time, as we have seen during recent years, opportunities sufficiently significant arise from month to month, and almost from week to week, from which inferences can, with rational probability, be drawn. I believe, Sir, that when that time comes the verdict will be the verdict that they desire and that they like; and they derive from current events accumulating and not insufficient evidence that such will be the case. And as they believe this, so, I think, I may say that we—those for whom I may presume to speak—believe it also. That that opinion of ours is the opinion of those who differ from us in this House or outside of it I do not say; but many of those who differ from us, if they do not believe that that is the case, are beginning rather ominously to suspect it. In the feeling of Ireland, Sir, we concur. We think that you have built your house upon the sand. The house may be in itself all very well as far as it goes. It is a majority of this House—a majority of this Parliament; and that majority is held together with a great, or possibly we may find a somewhat diminishing, tenacity. But the House will not make the foundation of the house. The foundation of the house, if we are right, is slipping away from under your feet. It appears to us on this occasion in connection with this Proclamation that the violence of your proceedings increases as the strength which alone can sustain them steadily diminishes. And this, Sir, Ireland sees, and wisely and justly judging the signs of the times and taking account of this accumulating evidence, she trusts to this great nation for the fulfilment of her reasonable wishes; and in that generous expectation I, for one am convinced that she will not be disappointed. I beg, Sir, to move the Resolution which stands in my name.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, humbly to represent to Her Majesty that there has been laid before this House a Special Proclamation of the Viceroy of Ireland, declaring the Association known as the Irish National League to be a dangerous Association, under 'The Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act, 1887.'

"That no information has been furnished to Parliament to justify the issue of the said Special Proclamation, by virtue of which Her Majesty's subjects are liable to be punished as criminals without judicial inquiry into the nature of their acts.

"And, that this House, in the absence of such information, prays that the said Proclamation shall not continue in force as to the Association named and described therein."—(*Mr. Gladstone.*)

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): There is much, Sir, in the speech to which we have just listened as to which I should like to have detained the House, but which, however interesting in itself, does not appear to me to be relevant to the issue now before us, but to be rather appropriate in its character to the too prolonged debates which we have already had on the Criminal Law Amendment Bill. There is especially one passage of the speech of the right hon. Gentleman on which I should like to have dwelt, in which he took occasion to repeat for the third or fourth time a proposition which I believe to be wrong in law and in fact, a proposition which he attributes—without a shadow of foundation, though I do not doubt that he believes it—to the late Attorney General for Ireland, of which no record can be found, which was not heard by his Friends, which is in direct contradiction to all he said in private, and which has been contradicted in the House of Lords, by, perhaps, the greatest living legal authority, the noble and learned Lord who was Solicitor General, Attorney General, and three times Lord Chancellor in the Governments of the right hon. Gentleman. That proposition is that by the Crimes Act we created new offences. But, important as such a statement would be if it were accurate, I must on this occasion abstain from doing more than giving it a passing contradiction, and must hasten at once to a consideration of the substance of the speech of the right hon. Gentleman. On what does he base the Resolution which has been put from the Chair? He bases it, in the first place, on the ignorance in which he asserts that the House has been left as to the ground of the Proclamation; and, in the second place, on on a defence of the action of the National League. I confess, though I think his case a weak one, on his first point he would have been well-advised had he not gone further. I think he would have been well-advised, in the interests of his own fame and reputation, if he had not taken upon himself to defend an association, the character of whose actions in certain parts of Ireland I shall shortly have to discuss before the House at considerable length. I will take the first count in the right hon. Gentleman's argument. It is that the House is not at this moment in possession of sufficient information to enable them to form a judgment on the question before them, and that the deficiency of information is the fault of Her Majesty's Government. Sir, information abounds. It is not want of information that is the difficulty, but the mass of information. It is not the difficulty of finding facts which taxes our industry or ingenuity, but how to make a selection out of the enormous accumulation of facts presented to our notice, and I will point out to the right hon. Gentleman that some of these facts have been laid before the House in the form of official Returns. He seems to make very light of those Returns —he seems to suppose that they have little bearing on this case. Is he aware that in the last Return laid before this House it is shown that nearly 5,000 persons in Ireland at this moment are suffering under the curse of Boycotting? Is he aware that Boycotting is the chief instrument of the National League—an instrument which it has freely used and never disavowed; and is he incapable of drawing the inference that the association under whose auspices nearly 5,000 persons are subjected to this kind of coercion is an association fatal to the rudiments of personal liberty in the country where it exists? That is not the only fact before the House in an official form. The right hon. Gentleman has quoted from the Cowper Commission. Has he read what the Commissioners say upon this question? The Cowper Commission gives an account of Boycotting practised by the members of the National League. I shall read an extract to the House—

"Outrage was at first made use of to intimidate parties who were willing to pay rents, but latterly the methods of passing resolutions at National League meetings, causing their proceedings to be reported in local newspapers, naming obnoxious men, and then Boycotting those named, have been adopted. Tenants who have paid even the judicial rents have been summoned to appear before self-constituted tribunals, and, if they failed to do so, or, appearing, failed to satisfy those tribunals, have been fined or Boycotted. The people are more afraid of Boycotting, which depends for its success on the probability of outrage, than they are of the judgments of the Courts of Justice. This unwritten law in some districts is supreme. We deem it right to call attention to the terrible ordeal that a Boycotted person has to undergo, which was by several witnesses graphically described during the progress of our inquiry. The existence of a Boycotted person becomes a burden to him, as none in town or village are allowed, under a similar penalty to themselves, to supply him or his family with the necessaries of life. He is not allowed to dispose of the produce of his farm. Instances have been brought before us in which his attendance at Divine Service was prohibited; in which his cattle have been some killed, some barbarously mutilated; in which all his servants and labourers were ordered and obliged to leave him; in which the most ordinary necessaries of life, and even medical comforts, had to be procured from long distances; in which no one would attend the funeral of or dig a grave for a member of a Boycotted person's family; and in which his children have been forced to discontinue attendance at the National School of the district."

Now, Sir, the facts here stated are familiar to the House, and I do not require to go to the Cowper Commission to establish their existence. But I quote the extract to show that there is evidence now before the House on this question in an official form, which of itself is conclusive.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): It is not a unanimous Report.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: If that is so, you ought to have prohibited the League by the Act.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I did not catch the right hon. Gentleman's interruption.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: I do not wish to interfere; but, as you desire it, I say that the Cowper Report ought to have been dealt with in the recent Act.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: That is an argument with which I shall deal in its proper place. The right hon. Gentleman seems to suppose that the Government have entirely relied upon secret and confidential Reports. Of course, there are confidential Reports. It is perfectly true there are confidential Reports in large numbers on which a case might be made; but it is a great error to suppose that you require confidential Reports to make out a case. There is ample and overflowing material in the reports of the local newspapers in Ireland, which, to go no further back than the last two or three months, abound in facts sufficient, in my judgment, and I hope in the judgment of the House, to justify the action of the Government in this matter. Then he asks me why we did not issue the Proclamation before; why we did not mention the League in the Crimes Act. I will give the hon. Gentleman—[Mr. T. M. Healy: Right honourable.]—the right hon. Gentleman three reasons why we did not mention the League in the Act. I have been of opinion ever since I went to the Irish Office that the League came under the definition of a dangerous association; but I thought it inexpedient to proclaim it until the Land Act was passed. That is the first reason why we did not put the National League by name in the Act? But there is another reason, of which the right hon. Gentleman should know something; for his own Government had experience of how an association can change its name without changing its nature. How the National League would have laughed at such legislation—[Mr. T. M. Healy: They laugh at you now.] [*Cries of* "Order!"]—which they would be able to overcome by no more elaborate process than a change of name. But there was yet a third reason why the National League is not mentioned by name in the Act. It may prove not to be the only association which will come under this clause. We cannot tell what dangerous associations may spring up under this Act. Had we limited the possibility of action to one association we should have rendered ourselves open to difficulties. I hope I have now answered sufficiently the right hon. Gentleman in regard to this matter. The right hon. Gentleman went on to say that, by our action, we had practically abolished the Habeas Corpus Act. It appears to me, with all due deference, that when the right hon. Gentleman made that statement he did not really understand what the Habeas Corpus Act does for the liberties of the country. [*Ironical cheers.*] Well, I will show what I mean. The effect of the Habeas Corpus Act, and the system of law of which it is the expression, is to make it impossible to put and keep a man in prison for an offence not known to be an offence when committed, or of which cognizance cannot be taken by the tribunals when it is committed. This effect it will still have. A man must have ample opportunity of knowing that he has committed an offence before he can be brought under the clauses of this Act. By the Proclamation and by the order depending upon it a particular association is declared to be illegal in a particular locality. If after that a man acts as a member of it he commits an offence against the law as knowingly and as directly as if he picked a pocket or broke into a house. Whether it is a good law or a bad law is a different point. The right hon. Gentleman thinks it is a bad law; we think it is a necessary law, and therefore a good law, and so far we differ; but there should be no difference of opinion on the point that the law, be it good or bad, leaves the man who obeys it under the protection of the Habeas Corpus Act. Does the right hon. Gentleman recollect the action of his own Government when he says, and says most falsely, that we have, in effect, suspended the Habeas Corpus Act?

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: That is not usual language.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I will at once apologize to the right hon. Gentleman; I meant no offence by using the word "falsely"; I simply meant that the accusation was not one that could be sustained. Does the right hon. Gentleman recollect that his own Government actually did what he alleges without a shadow of foundation that this Government has done? They suspended the Habeas Corpus Act, and by so doing destroyed the predecessor of the National League — the Land League — while the Leader of the Irish Party was in prison, when Parliament was not sitting, and without a fragment of information being given to the House or to the country. They proclaimed the Land League in a manner which made it absolutely impossible for any man in Ireland to know whether he would or would not be imprisoned by the Executive without the intervention of any tribunal. No doubt the proclamation of the Land League without the intervention of the Habeas Corpus Act is open to the strictures which the right hon. Gentleman has erroneously made upon us. Does he recollect the terms in which his Government proclaimed the Land League? They are very interesting taken in connection with the line of argument which it has pleased the right hon. Gentleman to take to-night. He was eloquent to-night upon the fact that the

National League was a protection to the tenants in the struggle with their landlords, and that we by our action are interfering with a legitimate combination which deals with the relations between landlords and tenants.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: That was not my statement at all.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: If the right hon. Gentleman wishes to correct me specifically I shall be glad to give way. I will now read the Proclamation the right hon. Gentleman issued in 1881, when the Habeas Corpus Act was really suspended—

> "Whereas an association styled the Irish Land League has existed for some time past and assumes to interfere with the Queen's subjects in the free exercise of their lawful rights, and especially "

—let the right hon. Gentleman mark these words—

> "to control the relations of landlord and tenant."

The right hon. Gentleman has done a great deal more, it appears, than change his opinions on Home Rule since this Proclamation; it appears that he has changed his opinions upon the fundamental operation of law in this country, and upon what does or does not constitute justice or injustice as between different classes. It is not merely his political opinion that has altered—his political morality has altered too. In vindicating the National League the right hon. Gentleman gave what I can only regard as a defence of Boycotting. I am aware that he faintly condemned certain of the aspects of the process; but in the main he appeared to find in the League something necessary, if not laudable, and something which produced excellent and desirable fruits in the country; but it appears to me that when the right hon. Gentleman claims Boycotting as a legitimate mode of limiting the unjust exercise of rights in any society, did it not occur to him that precisely the same argument, with no less effect and force, may be used to defend assassination, when used for the same purpose? I can understand someone following strictly the line of argument which the right hon. Gentleman suggested, and saying of assassination that it was an instrument the use of which he deplored, which leads to very disastrous consequences, which was perhaps wrong in itself, but which as a check, as a limitation on rights unduly pressed, might be used with advantage in certain countries and in certain states of society. I am sure the right hon. Gentleman would shrink from such an argument. Then he should be careful how he uses a similar one to justify practices which in times past nobody has more severely denounced than himself. I regret that it is necessary that I should go at some length into the character of this association, quoting evidence from various sources of information which in the main are open to hon. Members. I caanot give a better summary of the conclusions I shall claim to deduce than by reading one quotation, which is in these terms—

> "It is not only the landlords and the red-hot Orangemen who feel apprehension, but it is everyone who has offended the Land League—or the National League, as it was called afterwards—by not taking an active part in its support; everyone who has asserted his legal right to work for whom he likes or to take farms from whom he likes; everyone who has taken any part in bringing to justice those whom the organs of the now dominant Administration and Party regard as victims and martyrs; every quiet citizen and every member of that minority which would not be a minority if both Parties would join in a determination that law and order should no longer be trifled with in Ireland any more than it is trifled with in Yorkshire and Somersetshire."—(3 *Hansard*, [304] 1111.)

There cannot be a better summary of the facts and arguments I shall lay before the House. It does not lose any weight with me, and I am sure it will not lose any weight in the House, when I say that that passage is from a speech made by the right hon. Baronet opposite (Sir George Trevelyan) in the debate on the Government of Ireland Bill in April of last year. It has been asserted by the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) that the association which we take power to suppress in certain parts of Ireland is a political association, and ought to be treated with the same careful regard to all its rights as any other political association in Scotland, England, or Ireland. I entirely deny that, according to any sound definition of political association, the National League is a political association. That some of the objects of the National League may be political I do not deny. I have not the least doubt that all the members desire Home Rule, and will make every effort they can to obtain it, and I admit that that is a political object; but you cannot determine whether this association is a political association in such a sense that it deserves the respect of the House merely by defining the objects for which it was originated. You have to consider its methods also. Are the methods by which the National League obtains adhesion to its views, by which it obtains increase in the number of its members—are they argument and persuasion, the only instruments legitimately used by political organizations deserving of the name? I have no doubt that some of the ruffians who in the French Revolution used the guillotine to obtain uniformity of opinion in France would have described themselves—as indeed they did—as a political organization. In the same way, no doubt, the Inquisition would have been described as a religious organization. The Inquisition, like the National League, obtained adhesion to its ranks by other methods than those of argument and persuasion; and, had it suited the exigencies of the time, the right hon. Gentleman might have moved some such Resolution as this in defence of its position, and the senior Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) would have given it, as he now gives to the National League, his "moral support." But does that justify arguments of the kind I have described? The fact that associations are religious or political may absolve them from the judgment of this House; but it does not prevent us, should it be necessary, from taking action in the interests of order. I have had occasion to remind the House that the National League recruits itself by intimidation. That statement, when I first made it, was denied by the hon. Member who was, and still is, I believe, secretary of the organization. He said the Central League in Dublin would dissolve any branch that practised intimidation for such an object. I do not know what course the Central League may have taken; but I can state with absolute certainty that at the time I spoke, and before and since, the branches of the League have never hesitated to coerce persons to join it and to subscribe to its funds. It is that which fundamentally distinguishes the National League from anything that we know as a political organization in this country or in Scotland. Let me read a few extracts to establish what I say. Here is one dated the 13th of August, 1887. *The Munster Express* of that date says—

> "Kilmacow.—The usual meeting of this branch was held on Sunday, July 31. The Rev. Thomas Kennedy presided. A notice was ordered to be taken of Edmond Cassin's conduct, as a member, in giving assistance to James Kinsella to draw coals, knowing him to be an expelled member, and at the same time having the assistance of a supporter of a land-grabber. Mr. Peter Haberlin, Kilmacow, was then called in and charged with working for an obnoxious party. He admitted all, and promised, if pardoned, he would not offend for the time to come."

Of course, what I wish to point out here is that this is simply a way of saying that a man shall not work for anybody who has been expelled from his branch of the League. In *The Dundalk Democrat* of the 25th of June, 1887, there is a resolution which was passed by the Tallanstown branch condemning as traitors and cowards all persons who did not become members of the League. In *The Kerry Sentinel* of the 3rd of June, I read that a resolution was passed strongly condemning all persons who have not joined the League.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Give the text of the resolution.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: If the hon. and learned Gentleman doubts the accuracy of what I have read he can refer back for himself to the newspaper which I have mentioned. On the 12th of June—and this is official information—

> Five men carrying arms entered the house of Alexander Moyinham, of Raheen, put him on his knees, and fired shots over his head. The motive was that he had not paid his subscription to the National League.

The Tuam News of the 24th of June says that in the Kilcornan branch of the League a resolution was passed expelling all members who had any communication with persons who declined to join the League.

MR. EDWARD HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.): Is the right hon. Gentleman still reading from the papers?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: What I was reading from was a brief extract of a notice which appeared in *The Tuam News* of the 24th of June. Here is a resolution in *The Kerry Sentinel* of the 3rd of June, passed at the Knocknagoshel branch. It strongly condemns all persons in the district who have not joined the League. *The New Ross Standard*, of July 25, contains the following:—

> "Rathmure and Templeudigan Branch.—Mr. J. Redmond, V.P., presiding. It was announced that at next meeting a new committee should be appointed, as the term of the existing one had expired; consequently every member is expected to attend. Another cogent reason for a full attendance is that on that day will close the receiving of subscriptions for membership, and cards for same will be distributed. All who have not yet subscribed will be good enough to do so at or before next meeting, and the committee are requested to bring a list of the subscribers and non-subscribers in their respective localities. The names of the latter will be kept in the committee room as a record of the number of anti-Nationalists in the district. The charge made against a certain member at previous meeting was postponed, as the accused was absent. John Cullen, Rathduff, smith, came before the meeting, asking pardon for working for objectionable parties, and he promised, if admitted a member, he would never again work for these parties. His conduct in the past being so strongly opposed to the National cause, the further consideration of receiving him was deferred to a larger meeting. A long discussion on the meanness of grass-grabbers or grass sneaks next ensued, and resulted in a cordial vote of thanks to the Bree League for exposing these mean creatures. They also highly complimented Father Sheil for his spirited and very patriotic letter. We find that James Forristal, Grange (Anthony's brother), had cattle on forbidden grass, but he has withdrawn them."

We all know what is the fate of anti-Nationalists. If hon. Members have forgotten what that fate is, I will read another example. *The Midland Tribune* of the 11th of August, 1887, says—

> "Kilruane Branch.—A meeting of this branch was held on Sunday last, Mr. Michael Flannery, P.L.G., in the chair. The following resolution was agreed to:—'That we take the earliest opportunity of reminding our members of their duty with regard to the machinery they use in cutting down the harvest this season, and call on them to use no implements that are not the property of Nationalists. The adoption of such a course will have the effect of leaving the enemies of the tenant farmers all alone in their glory and their machines to rot in the field.'"

Through that you will observe what the fate of the anti-Nationalist is. The next extract, as will be seen from the character of it, is not from a newspaper. I have derived it from official sources of information—

> On the 22nd of January, 1887, the houses of 16 families were visited and the inmates ordered to join the National League.

[A Home Rule MEMBER: Where?] In County Kerry. I shall not give the exact locality—

> "On the 7th of February, 1887, the houses of 15 other families were visited in a like manner, the inmates being ordered to join the National League and subscribe 1*s*. in every £5 of their valuation towards its funds."

MR. T. M. HEALY: Visited by whom?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Visited by a gang of men. This advertisement appeared in *The New Ross Standard* of the 13th of August, 1887:—

> "Tullogher.—Met on Sunday, August 7. We have several times given public notice to those interested that their subscriptions were overdue, and unless defaulters had paid on or before a fixed date their names would be given to the public. When such a list appears people can have little excuse if some may find their names there emblazoned. . . . The first business taken up was to procure a list of those honourable men in the parish who have not yet paid their subscriptions. It was decided that the best course to be followed would be to invite a full attendance of the collectors at the next meeting, when they would be expected to furnish a complete list of the defaulters in their respective districts."

Now, in the case of associations in this country, it matters very little whether names are given to the public or not; but let the House recollect that the giving of the names of non-members or defaulting members of the National League to the public means that these men, their families, and their acquaintances are Boycotted. I think I have now given a sufficient number of extracts to prove my first proposition, which was that the recruiting of the National League is a recruiting which is done by intimidation, and that by this fact alone it is separated by an enormous abyss from any legitimate association whose methods of procedure consist of argument and persuasion. But the right hon. Gentleman went on to tell us that, besides being a political association, and on that account worthy of our respect, the National League was in effect a trade combination, and his argument was that it was analogous in its character to trade combinations in this country. What is the essence of trade combinations in this country? It is that persons who have a particular article to dispose of—namely, their labour—combine together for the purpose of seeing that it is disposed of at a price which they think proper, and on terms which they think just. That is the whole essence, as far as I know, of every labour association in this country, and I appeal to the Labour Members in this House to say if I am not right. If that be a true account, I ask is there the slightest resemblance between an association of the character which I have described, and which I will describe in greater detail later on, and the ordinary trade combinations with which we are acquainted in this country? Does the House not see that whereas combinations of tenants not to take a farm would be exactly analogous to combinations in this country, combinations to prevent other people from taking farms which they have a right to take and which they ought to take are upon a very different footing? I imagine that it requires no proof, and I do not think hon. Members opposite from Ireland will deny, after the speech of the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) the night before last, that one of the objects and methods of the National League is to prevent men taking farms through intimidation. Is that denied by the hon. Member for East Mayo himself? If it is, would it not be sufficient to show that the Plan of Campaign is under the patronage of the National League, has been supported by the League, and supported through the instrumentality of Boycotting and outrage? ["No!" *and cheers.*] Is it not sufficient to show that? Even by the hon. Gentleman's statement it is manifest that where the Plan of Campaign in its entirety does not exist, nevertheless intimidation against tenants who have the audacity to pay their just debts prevails to a large extent? I should like to read to the House an extract bearing on this point. This is a resolution passed at Kilmacow, on Sunday, June 26—

> "That we condemn in the most emphatic manner the callous and treacherous conduct of Mr. John Moloney, Thomas Kennedy, Edmond Barry, and Mrs. Lawrence (members of this branch), John Durney, Pat Durney, and Mrs. Hetherington (non-members), all of Skough, in paying rent to Peter Walsh while their brother tenants were being evicted, thereby enabling the exterminator to crush more ruthlessly and effectually his unfortunate victims; and to mark our abhorrence of such baseness we hereby expel the first four"—

An hon. Member: Hear, hear!

> —"and direct our secretary to demand their cards; while, of course, we regard the last three in exactly the same light."

Some hon. Member cried "Hear, hear!" but I should like to tell him that expulsion from the National League means something more than expulsion from a club. The next case I give is not from a newspaper. This happened in County Clare—

> The houses of Pat Morrisey and Mic Murrihy were fired into on the night of the 13th of August. Morrisey had paid his rent on the 26th of July without consulting the other tenants. For this he was denounced by the Mullough branch of the Irish National League. Murrihy had refused to sign a memorial with the other tenants. Shortly before the outrages the band of the Mullough branch of the Irish National League, headed by its president, Father Garry, C.C., marched by at short distance from these houses with the evident object of intimidation.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Whose report is that?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: That report I give upon my own authority—the authority that would have been the sole authority for the statistics, for not laying which upon the Table the right hon. Gentleman has denounced us during the greater part of his speech. It was also reported in another instance that on the 13th of July, 1887, at the weekly meeting of this branch "a man," who a short time ago was refused membership of the League for not having adopted the Plan of Campaign, was admitted on promising to do so immediately. And here let me say that since the Crimes Act was passed there has been a marked diminution in the number of cases in which the name is mentioned. These cases, I apprehend, clearly show the methods by which the League, which is represented to us as being a legitimate trade combination, on the lines of English trades unions, carries out its behests—namely, by intimidation and outrage. Let me also remind the House that in these cases the National League is using as its tools men who in many cases have cause profoundly to regret the action of the League and its influence over them—men who are quite willing and able to pay their rents, but who are compelled by the tyranny of the League to submit to the extreme penalty of eviction, involving a loss of their homes and the loss of their holdings—and this they are obliged to submit to though they can pay their rents, and avoid it because this irresponsible association says they shall join this combination to rob the landlord. These men are deprived of all their improvements, of their homes, and of everything they regard as valuable in order to satisfy the demands of tenants who have been sometimes less prosperous, often less deserving, than themselves.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Give an instance.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Is the hon. and learned Member not as well aware as I am how many of the tenants, let us say on the Lansdowne estates, would now give anything they are worth to be restored to their holdings?

Mr. T. M. HEALY: They can still redeem if they like.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: But they would not be allowed to redeem in consequence of the action of that organization of which the hon. and learned Gentleman is so distinguished a member. Another object of this League, which has been described to us as a legitimate trade union association, is to punish by all the means in its power those whom it is pleased to describe as "land-grabbers." I believe the hon. Member for East Mayo at Dublin two nights ago gloried in that fact.

Mr. DILLON: Would the right hon. Gentleman read what I said?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I have not the speech by me; and if the hon. Member denies what I say I will withdraw it. It is a matter of small importance to me, and of no importance to my argument. But, at all events, whether he denies it or not, I shall prove by instances that I have here that the National League does attempt to punish what it styles "land-grabbing"—in fact, it is an offence against which it directs all its tyrannical methods. Here is a case derived from official sources.

Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): I rise, Sir, to a point of Order. I wish to ask you, Sir, whether it is in Order for a Minister of the Crown to quote from an official document without laying it upon the Table?

Mr. SPEAKER: It does not follow that every document from which a Minister quotes must be laid upon the Table of the House. Public documents and despatches must, of course, be laid on the Table; but it is possible that a Minister may quote from confidential communications which could not be laid before the House even if moved for. But, of course, if a Minister declines to lay on the Table documents which he has quoted, it so much diminishes the authority they carry, inasmuch as the House cannot judge for itself of their value.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I am quoting the substance of the official Report—

> In November, 1886, the Mullagh branch of the National League condemned a man named Patrick Kennedy, because in 1879 he took a farm from which the widow Dempsey had been evicted, and he held it still. It was determined to hold a public meeting on the farm, and printed placards were posted through the country. On the 21st of November a meeting was held on the farm. About 3,000 persons were present; violent language was used, and Kennedy was hooted and groaned. He became so frightened, and the people became so hostile to him, that he went before the committee of the Mullagh branch of the National League, on the 6th of December, and promised to give up the farm. He obtained from the branch a 'permit' written by the secretary, stating that, as he had yielded to the League, and asked time till January to sell his stock, there was no objection to people dealing with Kennedy. Kennedy removed his cattle off the farm on the 8th of January, 1887. At a meeting of the Mullagh branch, on the 6th of March, 1887, the committee decided to write a letter to Kennedy, asking him to state whether he had given up the Kylebeg farm to the landlord or not. On the 10th of March Kennedy received a letter from the secretary of the branch, saying that they were informed that he was still in possession of the farm, although he had removed his cattle, and 'that if he did not send some satisfactory account before next meeting they would be under the disagreeable necessity of declaring him still a land-grabber.' Kennedy did not reply, and on the 5th of April he received another letter from the secretary, saying he was again directed to communicate with him, and demanding a reply. Kennedy did not reply. In May the former tenant, Mrs. Dempsey, put some sheep and goats to graze on the farm, and Kennedy was afraid to interfere, although he still pays rent for the farm. Mrs. Dempsey's son is now cutting the meadow on the farm, and Kennedy is afraid to interfere, and states he is waiting for the passing of the Crimes Act before he asserts his rights. *The Tuam News* publishes accounts of Kennedy's offence against the League and his consequent treatment as described.

The following report appeared in *The Wexford People* of July 23, 1887:—

> "Craanford and Monaseed.—League met on Monday the 11th instant. A communication was brought before the meeting asking if this branch had any objection to a gentleman buying out the farm of S. Calloran, from which James Keenan was heartlessly evicted. The committee were unanimously of opinion that no one should have anything to do with this farm."

The following account is an instance of the action of the League in Galway

West Riding for the purpose of compelling a man named Michael Flanagan to give up a farm:—

On the 10th of November, 1884, Michael Flanagan took the Hollywood farm, which had been surrendered by a man named John Rochford in 1882. On the 30th of August, 1885, Flanagan received a threatening letter warning him to give up the farm at once or prepare for death. On the 15th of November, 1885, he, in compliance with a verbal summons, attended before the committee of the Shanaglish National League, where he was examined as to the circumstances of his taking the farm. After his examination he was ordered to retire, and, being soon recalled, was told the committee decided that he should give up the farm. Flanagan said he would abide by their decision. On the 29th of November he was again brought before the committee, and asked if he was taking steps to give up the farm. He said he was, but asked for time to sell his stock. He was allowed till the 12th of February, 1886, to do so. He was then admitted a member of the National League. On the 12th of February he had not given up the farm, so on the 21st of February he was called before the committee, and a resolution was passed that he should give up the farm at once. Flanagan then refused to comply. Private information was received that his life was in danger, and he was constantly watched by police. On the 7th of March, 1886, the committee summoned Flanagan before them, and demanded that he should resign his card of membership; but on the intervention of a clergyman he was given time to think over his decision. On the 26th of March the Shanaglish branch passed a resolution pronouncing the Hollywood farm Boycotted and Flanagan a land-grabber. On the 15th of May a car-house and a car in it were maliciously burned, and on the 28th of January, 1887, about 200 yards of a wall round the Hollywood Farm were knocked down. On the 5th February, 1887, at a National League Convention held at Gort, Flanagan was denounced, and all who associated with him were condemned. And so on the 19th March a farmer named John Halloran, who was on friendly terms with and associated with Flanagan, was attacked by four men and very severely beaten. He would have been killed but for a timely rescue. Flanagan is still in constant danger, and as long as he holds this farm his life will be insecure. Accounts of his case were published from time to time in *The Tuam News* of the 26th of March, 1886, and other dates.

After hearing that case, will the right hon. Gentleman still maintain that there is any analogy between the proceedings of the National League and the proceedings of trades unions in this country?

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): Was that in 1884?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I have brought that case down from 1884 to the present time. I have not quoted from *The Tuam News*, but from my official information; but I am informed that from time to time notices of the case were published in *The Tuam News*. Here is another case; it occurred in the Portumna district of the County of Galway—

On the 27th of December a man named Heagney was brought before the National League committee and charged with having grabbed land. (This land Heagney took 18 years ago.) He refused to give up the land, and on the 15th of February, 1887, threatening notices were posted against him, and he became Boycotted. More notices were posted on the 20th of February, and when he or any of his family go out into the country or to Mass they are hooted and groaned. Heagney's children and a servant man of his have been assaulted, and as their lives are in danger they have been placed under police protection. On the 1st of July a sheep belonging to Heagney's servant was maliciously killed.

Will the right hon. Gentleman, in the face of these cases, maintain that there is any analogy between the proceedings of the National League and the proceedings of trade unions in this country?

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: I never said anything about the relations of the National League to trades unionism.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The whole burden of the right hon. Gentleman's song for the last three months has been to draw this very parallel between combinations for the protection of the tenants in Ireland and combinations for the protection of workmen in England. Here is an instance of a man being Boycotted who took a farm from which a tenant was evicted 41 years ago—

A meeting of the Killoe branch, County of Longford, of the National League was held on the 22nd of May, and a resolution was adopted and published in the local newspaper condemning a man named Owen Hughes for having grabbed a grass farm from which a tenant had been evicted. The eviction took place 41 years previously. Within the last few years the farm has been held by two other persons, who, in succession, had to give it up owing to the action of the League. Four years ago Hughes' windows were broken and a shot fired into his house, and a year ago, being sorely pressed, he promised the League he would give up the farm, but he has not done so. He is Boycotted, cannot purchase goods, and two men who ventured to speak to him were summoned before the League and censured.

I cannot conceive that a more remarkable instance of the action of the League can be given to the House.

MR. T. C. HARRINGTON (Dublin, Harbour): From what is the right hon. Gentleman quoting?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: It is, partly, official information.

MR. T. C. HARRINGTON: Is there any public notice of it?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The resolution which I mention was published in the *Weekly News.* I hope that will be sufficient. If anyone cares to inquire further into these matters, he may consult the *The Leinster Leader* and other local papers. In *The Tuam News* of the 18th of July there was a charge of giving a water supply to a "grabber," and of allowing him a right of way to the well to procure water. The local branch of the League caused a wall to be built, blocking up the passage to the well. I do not know what comments hon. Gentlemen will be disposed to pass on that proceeding. Then, on the 11th July, there was a case of a man taking an evicted farm brought before a branch of the League, and he was compelled to make a public apology for having committed that crime, not against the laws of the land, but against the laws of the League. *The Munster Express* of the 30th July, 1887, reports that a branch of the League at Kilmacow in the County of Kilkenny had before it the case of Thomas Ryan, who, with his brother, was evicted for non-payment of rent, and who, unknown to his brother, came to terms with the landlord as far as his own share of the farm was concerned. It was stated that—

> "Great interest attached to this case, because some short-sighted people could not see how Thomas Ryan could have done wrong in taking his own land. The committee, however, unanimously condemned him for not having acquainted his fellow-tenant with his action, or sought the advice of the National League, and they ordered his name to be erased from the roll of members."

On this particular branch of my case I believe I have said enough to satisfy the House of that no punishment is regarded as too severe in dealing with a person who may have taken a farm from which another tenant has been evicted, with a view to carry on a legitimate industry. But there is another offence against what is known as the law of the League, which, I think, specially deserves the consideration of the House; it is with regard to the taking of grazing land. I think this particularly interesting, because it is perfectly obvious, from the nature of the case, that the only possible object of making that an offence against the rules of the League is to injure the landlord, not to benefit the tenant. I can conceive that there are persons who think that they are doing the community a service in punishing a man who has taken an evicted farm; but when you are punishing a man for no other offence than that of taking landlord's grass is it not manifest that you are using the vast power you have taken upon yourselves, not for protecting the tenants, but solely and only for the purpose of injuring, and, if possible, destroying the landlords? And yet the proofs that this is an offence against the League, and punished as severely as any other, are absolutely overwhelming and conclusive. Let me give a few cases to the House—

> At a meeting of the Ballyhur branch of the National League on May 22, 1887, a resolution was proposed condemning a farmer named Michael Allen for taking the grazing of some glebe land from Lord Kenmare. This glebe land was voluntarily surrendered by a farmer named Leahy. The neighbouring farmers objected to the land being taken by Allen, as they were in the habit of allowing their cattle to stray over it and get cheap grazing. On May 29 the case of Allen came before the League meeting again. He was accused of grabbing, and condemned. On June 2 Allen had to be given protection. On June 27 a report was received that Allen had submitted to the League, promising to give up the glebe land in November, 1887. Allen informed the police that he required no further protection as he was now safe. On July 31 Allen gave up the land, having been required to do so by the League in writing.

Here is a man whose sole offence is that he had taken land which the previous tenant had voluntarily given up. That he was acting legally, it might be, even meritoriously, nobody will deny, and yet in consequence of that action he is condemned by the League, and has to receive police protection. But when he finds life so intolerable that he has to give way to the authority of the League he informs the police that he does not require protection any longer. I cannot conceive a stronger instance of the species of tyranny exercised by an irresponsible body than the action of the League in this matter.

MR. T. C. HARRINGTON: What is the right hon. Gentleman's authority for that case?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Official. Here is a quotation from *The New Ross Standard* of July 25, 1887—

> "Ramsgrange and Sutton's Parish.—Met on Sunday, the 19th instant, Very Rev. Canon Doyle, P.P., president, in the chair. P. Cahill,

steward of Mr. Gifford, came before the meeting and said Mr. Gifford wanted to be a member of the League. Mr. Gifford was not a landlord; he was only a tenant. If he was allowed to be a member he would act up to the rules of the League. The following resolution passed:—'That we accept Mr. Gifford's explanation that he is not a landlord, but merely a tenant, and that, therefore, we deem it reasonable for him to act in all matters, selling grass, &c., as a tenant farmer; and that we further accept his adherence to the rules of the Irish National League, and receive him as a member.'"

Because this man is a tenant and not a landlord, therefore the National League permits him to sell his grass to whom he likes, when he likes, and where he likes. If hon. Members will refer to *The Wexford People* of the 23rd of April this year, they will find two resolutions—the one passed at Cushinstown, prohibiting the taking of demesne lands for grazing, the names of the offenders to be published; and the other passed at Gorey, directing the names of persons who took grass lands contrary to resolution to be read out, and an offender residing in another parish to be reported to the neighbouring branch. Therefore, if any Member of this House was before in doubt whether the authority of the League was to extend to grazing land from which no tenant had been evicted, he can be in doubt no longer. I have now shown the House, by specific instances, the kind of action which the League has taken with respect to the relations of landlord and tenant. But he would be a shallow interpreter of history who could for a moment think it possible that action of that kind can be confined to the individual who commits the offence against the avowed rules of the League. If you allow any body of men to arrogate to themselves the authority which the League arrogates to itself, you must expect to find that that authority is extended till it interferes with every relation of life. But this general truth is specially true of the League in consequence of the special character of the punishment which is the chief sanction of its decrees. It is used for every purpose. You can only Boycott a man by threatening to Boycott a vast number of people who trade or associate with him. Therefore, Boycotting strikes a vast number of persons who have committed no offence against the League, and yet who suffer from the heavy weight of the penalties it has the power to inflict. *The Nationalist* of the 13th of August, 1887, speaking of the Baltinglass branch, says—

> "A largely-attended meeting of this branch was held at Mr. Byrne's on Sunday. Mr. William Loughlin presided. . . . . Mr. Denis Murphy, of Woodfield, who hires out a mowing machine, came before the meeting to explain about his having mowed Boycotted meadows in county Kildare. He said he was unaware of the Boycotting; but, as it was so extensively published, he should have known of it or made inquiries about it. He would make every reparation in his power, and volunteered to put an apology in *The Nationalist* and *Leinster Leader* of Saturday. This was deemed satisfactory, and the meeting adjourned."

Can any humiliation be more profound than that? Can anything better show how deeply intimidation has eaten into the heart of the people? Here is a resolution passed, according to *The Wexford People*, on the 4th of July, at a meeting of the League in Ramsgrange and Sutton's parish—

> "That the conduct of John Quinn, of Tinnock, is most reprehensible. He came to Ramsgrange on the 19th ultimo, and admitted he had violated an important resolution of the New Ross Convention. Yet since then he had the audacity to attack a respectable member of the baronial committee for having done his duty in reporting it. He is, therefore, required to come before the National League on the 10th instant, and apologize for his conduct, or take the consequences; and that Patrick Stafford, of Boderan, be also required to attend on the same occasion."

Here is an extract from *The Kilkenny Journal* of the 13th of August, 1887, as to a meeting of the Dunnamaggin branch—

> "The members of this branch met on Sunday. . . . Letters have been read from the neighbouring branches in answer to complaints from this branch; a member apologized for using a Boycotted machine, and promised not to do so again."

I am now going to read a case which appears almost pathetic. *The Leinster Leader* of the 10th of July, 1887, speaking of the Ballyadam and Wolfhill branch, tells this story of what it calls "a repentant sinner"—

> "Abbin Morrin, from Boley, came before the committee, and stated that in an evil hour, and being pressed by extreme want, he drew coals for the benefit of Trench's house wreckers. He was now sorry for having so far betrayed his neighbours and his country, and promised that if the committee would restore him to the friendship of the people he would not offend again. The committee promised, in consequence of Morrin committing the offence before any

evictions were carried out, to consider his case next meeting if in the meantime he kept aloof from the landlord party."

Let the House observe that even extreme want was not thought by the League to be an excuse for serving an unpopular master. The next case, I think, shows to what depth of humiliation the tenantry have been reduced. The case is reported in *The Leinster Leader* of August 6. A man was called upon to explain why he had used a hack-car which belonged to an Emergency man, and replied that he did not know upon whose car he was getting, but that after travelling some distance on the car he discovered where he was. He admitted that he should have got off the car there and then, and he expressed his regret for remaining on the car when the state of affairs became known to him. That is almost a more impressive case than those which tell of National League proceedings of a more violent character, for it shows how every action of life, however innocent in itself, is controlled by the League, and how abject is the position of those persons who come under its wrath. Then there is another case reported in *The Leinster Leader* of August 13. The committee of the Ballyadam and Wolfhill branch of the League were considering the cases of certain Emergency men in the neighbourhood, and the rev. chairman said—"There is Jack George, with his henchman Larry Dempsey, whose action, it is needless to add, excites disgust." A Mr. Brennan replied that he did not think that Dempsey would have gone to George had he not been unable to procure the necessaries of life, and the rev. chairman thereupon said—"It is no excuse at all." Now, what does the House think of such action, and of the fact that the League that indulges in proceedings finds defenders here? May I just read a few reasons why people are Boycotted? There is an extremely interesting case, which will be instructive to the House as showing how one man's offence is visited by the League upon his relatives and friends. Justin M'Carthy, senior, allowed a land agent to collect rents at his house. That was his offence, and on account of it Justin M'Carthy, junior, is Boycotted. Jeremiah M'Carthy is similarly treated, because he is Justin M'Carthy's brother; another person is Boycotted because he speaks to members of M'Carthy's family; a blacksmith is Boycotted because he is Justin M'Carthy's friend; someone else is Boycotted because he voted for M'Carthy at the election of Poor Law Guardians; another man is Boycotted because he swore an information against some members of the League who assaulted and robbed M'Carthy; and yet another because he sold a heifer to M'Carthy; and another because he drank in a tent with a member of M'Carthy's family. This case shows how far-reaching are the effects of the decrees of this irresponsible tribunal, and how large is the amount of suffering that may be caused in one neighbourhood where a violation of its rules has been committed by a single individual.

Mr. T. C. HARRINGTON: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that that imaginative statement has been contradicted? Will he give the House the authority upon which he repeats the statement?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I think it would be more convenient if the hon. Member reserved his reply to the proper time. As the hon. Member has chosen to throw some doubt on my authority, I may tell hon. Gentlemen who cast aspersions upon these statements that they are on the authority of officials to whose character the highest testimony was borne by the late Chief Secretary for Ireland, the right hon. Member for Newcastle (Mr. John Morley). To return to my argument—as the House will recollect, I was endeavouring to show how the National League extends its sphere of operations, and the case to which I am now about to refer is not connected with land. The tenants of whom I am about to speak are not tenants of farms, but of ordinary houses. It is known as the New Ross Workhouse case.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: As a matter of Order, I wish to know whether the right hon. Gentleman will lay upon the Table of the House the quotations which he reads, and which he calls official information?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The right hon. Gentleman was not in the House when the Speaker gave a ruling on that point.

Mr. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.): I was in the House, and the Speaker gave no ruling on that point. The ruling had reference to private and not official information.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: I wish to ask, Sir, if when a Minister quotes from an official document it is not the invariable rule of Parliament and the House that the Paper shall be laid on the Table, and that he is not at liberty to quote it without laying it on the Table?

MR. SPEAKER: I have already given a ruling on the point generally, but not on the specific point. What I said was that it does not follow, because a Minister quotes from a document, that it must be laid upon the Table. It might be a confidential document like a Police Report. Such Reports are frequently quoted and yet not laid upon the Table. But when the right hon. Gentleman calls a document official it is not necessarily implied that the document is confidential; and it might be necessary, in order that the House may verify the statements made, that it should be laid on the Table of the House.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: To print all these references would only cause a great deal of trouble.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: I do not refer to the extracts from newspapers. What I wish to know is whether, after the ruling of the Speaker, the right hon. Gentleman will lay upon the Table every official document from which he has quoted?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: No, Sir. My quotations have been of three kinds. I have read advertisements that have appeared in newspapers; I have read confidential documents; and I have read notes which I have made of certain cases. I presume the right hon. Gentleman does not want the first of these, and he cannot have the second. When I was interrupted I was reminding the House of a very curious case, which shows how the National League interferes in matters altogether outside the sphere of land and landlordism. The tenants in the New Ross case were householders, not tenants of land, but household tenants from week to week. Under the compulsion of the National League they allowed themselves to be evicted for non-payment of rent in August, 1886. They were taken into the workhouse, and the Guardians of the workhouse, being practically the nominees of the National League, these people were allowed special and unauthorized privileges, wholly outside the practice of the Poor Law. The Local Government Board in Ireland thought it necessary to interfere, and, in order to insure that the tenants should be treated like other paupers, dismissed the Guardians and appointed Vice Guardians. These unfortunate house tenants, who, in an evil moment, obeyed the National League, remained in the workhouse for 10 months, and at the end of that time insisted upon going out, as they could stand it no longer. During these 10 months every effort was made to prevent the poor rates being paid, in order to compel the Local Government Board to withdraw from their position. A force of police was required to protect the collector of poor rate in the district in consequence of the action of the National League. These tenants, who had stayed in the workhouse for 10 months at the bidding of the National League, would endure it no longer, and they came out and returned to their homes. They have ever since been Boycotted by the local branch of the National League for not obeying its orders. For my own part, I am unable to conceive any form of tyranny more gross and scandalous and unwarrantable than this case discloses. The people were not farmers at all. The League first compel them to leave their home, to go into the workhouse and to stay there, and finally Boycott them for leaving it. I hope, Sir, that I have now made it clear that the National League, whose branches we have taken powers to suppress, has made itself responsible, by resolution published in the face of day in the newspapers, for urging persons to defy and resist the law, for urging resistance to the payment of local rates, for interfering with the ordinary civil rights of individuals in the matter of taking land, selling and buying goods and cattle, letting houses, engaging servants, employing professional advisers, the exercise of the ordinary affairs of the Poor Law franchise, and the choice of companions in every-day life. And among the commodities of which it would deprive its victims are the common necessaries of existence—bread and water—that there is a system of espionage established, under which the actions which it condemns are made known by one branch to another, so that a man who is denounced in one part of a district cannot escape from the tyranny of the League by fleeing to another. That tyranny overshadows him. Vainly he changes his sky, for tyranny overshadows him wherever he goes. Under this monstrous system, at the present moment some 5,000 people in Ireland are actually suffering punishment, and they represent but a very small fraction of those——

Mr. EDWARD HARRINGTON: Stuff!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: This is the sort of interruption of which the right hon. Gentleman opposite complains, and to which I have been subjected several times. I should have asked Mr. Speaker to interfere to protect me several times from the observations of hon. Members opposite; but, as a matter of fact, I am personally indifferent to them, although I do not think they conduce to the order of debate, or to the clearness or consecutiveness of my argument. Well, I said that nearly 5,000 persons are actually subjected to Boycotting, and that number represents but a small and insignificant fraction, because others are afraid of being Boycotted, and either do that which they would rather not do, or they abstain from doing that which they would rather do, and which they have a perfect and absolute right to do. And when I hear hon. Members like the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon), who stated that he prided himself upon the fact that he had opposed outrage and violence, and that the Leaders of the National League had themselves opposed outrage and violence, I say that it is my deliberate conviction that a condition of society in which there is no intimidation, but in which, through failure of the police or other cause, there may be crime, is far healthier than a state of society in which there may be no crime, but in which intimidation so prevails that no man living under its shadow is master of his own actions. About the facts I have stated to the House, taking them broadly, there can, I conceive, be no dispute. The great bulk of them have been taken from the public papers, or from sources the trustworthiness of which, at all events, the right hon. Gentleman opposite cannot complain — they are from sources open not only to this Government alone, but to every other Government. How poor is the plea put forward by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), that the association whose deeds and operations I have described to the House must be considered either as a political association or a legitimate combination in the interests of the tenants. The truth is, the right hon. Gentleman appeals to us in the name of freedom. He always appeals to us in the name of freedom. It appears to me that there is nothing in Ireland that cannot be done if you only give it a sufficiently fine name. The whole object of the Leaders of the Irish Party at the present moment appears to me to be to treat the Irish problem in as histrionic a manner as they can. They desire to take a course of action which will strike the imaginations of the people of England and conceal from them the real nature of the acts which are done in Ireland. It is in obedience to that principle that they like to compel landlords to adopt the last resort of eviction. The result of eviction is that some hardships will really happen, and many hardships will be invented; and these are made the most of and figure prominently in speeches made by hon. Members from Ireland and by Radical Members of England. The people of this country little know that the outrages depicted before them in these glowing terms would never have taken place but for the action of the organization which the Government to-night ask the House to give them the power to suppress. As the Leaders of the Irish Party have played this tragic comedy of Irish politics in the matter of eviction, so they attempt to defend, under the seductive name of law and liberty, an association whose very essence consists in nothing else but a negation of law and a negation of liberty. The right hon. Gentleman opposite comes down to the House and tells us that we are straining the law and interfering with freedom when we are trying to put down that system of intimidation which, if it be allowed to prevail any longer in Ireland, will make the observance of law and the restoration of liberty almost impossible. I believe that many hon. Members have not hitherto been aware of the facts I have mentioned to-night; but after what I have now stated I hope there will be no ignorance on the point in future. They may, up to the present, have shut their eyes as to what is the true nature of the so-called political organizations; but if in the future they are blind, their blindness will be wilful blindness. They have made themselves to-night, through the mouth of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), apologists of intimidation. You cannot be an apologist for intimidation without making yourselves accomplices of intimidation; and on every hon. Member who votes for the Resolution now before us will, in my opinion, rest the guilt of having done all in his power to perpetuate a system which would be a disgrace to any civilized country in the world. I believe the verdict of the House will be in favour of the Government; and I believe that, as the verdict of the House will be in favour of the Government because hon. Members know the facts upon which the Government rest their case, so the verdict of that people whom the House represents will not be the less in favour of the Government when they realize the true nature of the system at which we aim this blow. The political freedom about which you talk is totally and absolutely valueless except in so far as it contributes to personal freedom. That is, and that must be, the basis upon which every superstructure of political liberty in a healthy, free society must rest; and my belief is that the love of individual liberty is so deeply engrained in the minds of the English people that, when they once understand and realize what is the working of that association against which this Proclamation is levelled, they will, without distinction of Party or creed, support the Government in the action which, in the exercise of our responsibility, we have thought it right to take.

Mr. EDWARD HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.) said, that the Chief Secretary for Ireland had made that night what he was sure would be described by his friends as the best speech of his life. The right hon. Gentleman had quoted from three sources of information which he might say were anonymous. A large part of his quotations consisted of reports from the public Press of meetings of the National League; but he would like to point out that there was no more authenticity as regarded those reports than there was with regard to any other paragraph; and he would have Members recollect with what indignation day after day Ministers had stood up in their places and repudiated the assumption that they should pay any attention to anonymous paragraphs even though they appeared in some of the most important papers. These local papers from which the right hon. Gentleman had quoted were in a great measure dependent upon unpaid local correspondents, who gave more attention to the rounding of a sentence sometimes than to its strict accuracy, and who very often put things into the newspaper which looked big, but which those who were acquainted with the circumstances of the locality know how to estimate at their proper value. It might be said that the editors of these papers ought to exercise more discretion. So they ought, and perhaps under the Crimes Act they would; but the fact remained that many of these items got into the papers in a form which was especially regrettable to those who had the conduct of these newspapers and those members of the National League who were represented to have performed the actions. He did not pretend to deny the general accuracy of the Press reports; but, take them all in all, and take them at the worst, what did the whole statement of the Chief Secretary amount to? After searching over the transactions of all the local branches of the National League—1,800 in number—for many months and years the Chief Secretary had only been able to indicate that in a particular branch they threatened to publish the names of those who had not subscribed, and in another branch they threatened to cut off a member who did not conform to the rules. After all, it was a common thing for any society to threaten to cut off members who did not conform to the rules; and he would remind them that on a former occasion, when the Chief Secretary said certain National League branches had threatened to publish the names of defaulting members, the hon. Member for the Harbour Division of Dublin (Mr. T. C. Harrington) had shown that whenever such a thing came under the cognizance of the Central Branch of the League such action was strongly condemned. Wherever such a course had been adopted by a local branch, not only had the National League in Dublin condemned that branch, but the better sense of those who were in the local branch had always been against such a proceeding. He would challenge the right hon. and gallant Gentleman opposite (Colonel King-Harman) to show a single instance in Ireland where the threat to publish the names of defaulting Members was carried out. After all, were they not living in a country which pretended to have a Constitution? Did they not in England day after day hear threats of what the Socialists would do if certain conditions were not granted; and did they not see threats in public papers of what would be done if the Home Secretary persisted in a certain course? Even if such a threat of publication were carried out the parties had their remedy under the ordinary law against the editor of the newspaper, who could be subjected to a severe punishment. They did not object to the Government using the Crimes Act against these isolated cases of individuals or individual branches who had wrongly and grossly violated the law. They maintained, however, that the ordinary law was sufficient to meet these cases, and they now maintained with greater force that the Government having a Crimes Act were able to deal with this violence and intimidation whenever it showed itself. The Government had chosen the time when they had sent what they said was a message of peace to Ireland—as he believed in his soul for the purpose of irritating the people of Ireland—to strike at that organization which their own witnesses declared to be the salvation of the people of Ireland. The right hon. Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) had referred to the different editions of General Buller's evidence. It was a matter of common notoriety that that evidence as printed was not as it was given, and that the ordinary course as to proofs was not taken in the case of General Buller. District Inspector Davis, too, had had leading questions put to him in order to make him say what the Government wanted to prove that evening, "The strings of intimidation," he was asked, "are held by the League?" He says—

> "I only know that in a case where it denounced land-grabbers, and those people appealed to the central branch, the local branch was admonished for interfering, and those people held on without trouble ever since."

The President said—

> "I gather from you that there is less outrage now than in former days, and that Boycotting still prevails, but that rents with abatement are being paid better than they have been?"

The answer was, "Yes; and in that

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district abatements were necessary." Being asked whether Boycotting was to be attributed to local action or to the influence of the League, he said—"I would not attribute it to the League at all." He now came to what he thought the gist of the matter. Sir James Caird said—

> "I understand there is no sympathy among the respectable tenants with these outrages?—Yes; there is not.—Then there must be an organization exercising a tremendous power over them. Have you any objection to state what that organization is?—I do not think that it would be for the advantage of the country that I should say what it is."

It would be seen from that evidence that the witness was again and again led up to the brink of the statement which the Government desired, and every time he shied at it. The officer of the Government said that there was in those districts an organization to name which might frustrate the ends of justice. It was in districts where the Land League had not established a footing, but where there were societies which encouraged crime and outrage, that disorder and lawlessness prevailed. The Chief Secretary had mentioned the case of a man named Justin M'Carthy living in a small and obscure village in County Kerry, and the right hon. Gentleman named a list of about 50 or 60 persons in that single parish who were stated to be Boycotted. These names were not read out from the local papers, but from "official" sources. Now, taking each Kerry family as averaging six or seven persons, the right hon. Gentleman's list would represent nearly all the population of the parish as being Boycotted. The thing was an utter absurdity; and that preposterous story would excite a hearty laugh among the miserable people of that district at the expense of the Chief Secretary when they came to hear of its being attempted to be palmed off upon the House. It was an insult to the intelligence of those who really knew Ireland to represent, as was done in the official Returns, that 5,000 persons were Boycotted in that country. When any serious accusation was made by the Chief Secretary against the National League, and when they sought to test the ground on which it was based, the right hon. Gentleman said—"Oh, I fall back upon official information and on privileged communications," adding, in his lofty style, that he gave the facts to the House on his word as Chief Secretary. If the Irish Members were only supplied with the particulars on which the right hon. Gentleman founded his accusations, they would be able, he was sure, to dispose satisfactorily of every one of them. He believed that Mr. Samuel Hussey, who was the head and tail of all those fabrications which appeared in *The Times* and the I L P U, and on the official Returns of that House, had been the sole author of the cases mentioned by the Chief Secretary. There might be family quarrels here and there between the inhabitants of a village; they might, sometimes, not interchange good wishes with each other at Christmas time or the New Year; and, occasionally, they might have given one another a good basting; but it was a gross "sham" to speak of those things as aggravated cases of Boycotting. He did not believe that there was a sane man from John O'Groat's house to the Land's End who, if he read what he had now said, and placed it side by side with the speech of the Chief Secretary, would not believe that the Boycotting case of the Chief Secretary was an utter delusion and a sham. As to the interruptions which the Chief Secretary encountered, a great deal of the blame for them attached to the other side, because, when the right hon. Gentleman was quoting from some paper, he all at once made some outrageous charge, as if he were still reading, against that organization whose interest Irish Members had at heart, and when he was challenged to state where he got his facts he said he was relying on official information. The right hon. Gentleman wound up his speech by an accusation against the League. He said that English Radical Members and Irish Members going over to Ireland and finding evictions going on started a tragic drama to excite the pity of the people of England, and he asked the House to remember that it was the National League that was to blame for all. He (Mr. E. Harrington) denied the justice of that accusation; it was almost too much even for a Chief Secretary for Ireland to make. The right hon. Gentleman knew that it was the evictions that necessitated the Land League, which was, according to him, the predecessor of the National League. But he (Mr. E. Harrington) thought it was in many respects dissimilar. It had widened its scope considerably since it succeeded to the Land League. He could tell the right hon. Gentleman what he could verify himself by referring to statistics—he could tell him that there were only two evictions in the County of Kerry in 1878. They rose to 19 in the next year, and from that year onwards the evictions had not been less than at an average of from 350 per quarter in the County of Kerry. He asserted that since the commencement of the trouble in the County of Kerry—since the commencement of what was called the agitation, there had been rendered homeless by evictions in those years as many as 14,000 persons, and while some of these had been restored to their places, he said that there were between 2,000 and 3,000 people in the County of Kerry huddled together by the ditch sides in places where hon. Members would not put their dogs after a day's shooting. Seeing and knowing that that was going on for years, they in self-defence for the protection of the people, and acting on the instincts of manhood, and disregarding whatever the consequences might be to themselves, flung themselves into an organization that was already awake in the country, and tried as far as they could by that organization to stem the disasters brought upon them by landlordism. It was too much for them, therefore, to listen to these accusations, and all this talk about the League inciting to crime, violence, and intimidation. What was the League doing at present? If they went into the office of the National League in Dublin they would find a large staff—or at least they would when they decided on the Proclamation—engaged in the work of registration in order to keep their political position in the country in the districts where there might possibly be a narrow fight. The Government struck down that which was their political weapon and which was their protective weapon, and which was the shield of their persecuted people, and having done so they still chose to speak of the existence of Constitutional freedom in Ireland. He would not weary the House further; but if he sat down it was not for want of matter—it was not for want of discovering off-hand in the speech of the Chief Secretary for Ireland sufficient matter which he could show to that House to be wholly baseless. He believed that the Irish Members would be able to show that there was no foundation of truth for the accusation made against the National League as a whole, and that if here and there there was a fault on the part of individual branches in obscure localities, or individual members of that organization, there was no more than would be incidental to an organization of the kind when people had to try and act within the strict letter of a cruel law, and to protect themselves against unjust and harsh evictions, and at the same time to try and educate the conntry up to that tone of mind which would be useful when the time came to apply themselves to the reconstruction of the Government of Ireland. He challenged the Government to go on with their Proclamations. The Irish Members had told the Government what their purpose was. If they were found to be the abettors or counsellors of violence, then let the Government punish them by all means. But in the absence of this necessary evidence, they ask the Government not to proclaim this organization; not to destroy an instrument for good. If the Government disregarded their appeal, then so strong would the Irish Members feel it to be their duty to the people of Ireland—believing that the sharpest hour of need was the nearest hour to triumph—that they would adhere to their work in Ireland and not shirk the consequences, either there or in Parliament.

VISCOUNT EBRINGTON (Devon, Tavistock) maintained that the hon. Member had offered no reply to the case of the Chief Secretary founded on the statements of newspapers and of advertisements inserted in them by the local secretaries of the National League. When the hon. Member recommended persons who felt injured by such advertisements to seek redress against editors by means of the ordinary law, he reminded him of a statement made last year by the right hon. Member for the Bridgeton Division of Glasgow, that for a Boycotted person to try and get redress by means of the ordinary law and from a jury struck from the ordinary panel was a cruel farce. The question before the House was not one of principle, but of expediency. As far as principle was concerned, it was decided by the Crimes Act and by the large majorities who gave their assent to that measure. Those majorities took the course they did, believing that the hands of the Government required to be strengthened in order to deal with the conflict between lawlessness and order in Ireland, and because they felt it was possible that the Government might require the power which they were now demanding in order to deal with the National League. Having voted for the Crimes Act, he was not inclined to refuse to the Government the weapon which they now desired. He trusted that the Government, having decided that it was necessary to use those powers, would not use them in a half-hearted manner. Whatever might be said of the Irish, they were a very bad people to run away from—and he hoped the Government would not flinch from the course they had taken. The House had been told that the National League was the salvation of the Irish people and and that it had done its best to repress outrage. In his judgment, however, it was a somewhat remarkable coincidence that the largest number of cases of Boycotting occurred in the county of Cork, where there were more branches of the National League than in the rest of Ireland. It was also remarkable that in Ulster, where there were comparatively few branches of the League, there was less Boycotting and fewer persons required police protection; but that in Munster, where there were 400 branches of the League, there were more outrages last year than in any other Province of Ireland. The other night the hon. Member for Longford drew a dreadful picture of agricultural prospects in the West and South West of Ireland. He pointed out that the hay crop was a failure, that prices generally would rise, and that where the people were poorest there rents would be risen. But the hon. Gentleman did not carry his argument to a conclusion, or he would have told them also that when the food of the live stock was exhausted, the animals would necessarily be put into the market and sold for what they would fetch, and the consequent reduction in the price of meat would more than counterbalance a trifling rise in the price of butter or potatoes. When he was told that the National League had been the salvation of the people he remembered that these words were attributed to the officer who would be concerned in enforcing this Proclamation, and he hoped the Government would rely largely upon the courage and discretion of General Buller in carrying out the provisions of the Act, and that, having chosen their policy, as he believed, wisely, they would pursue it with that patience and courage, which alone would render it successful.

MR. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.) said, it was quite impossible for any one who had read anything about Ireland to doubt that Boycotting and intimidation had largely prevailed, and had been the weapons largely used by the National League to enforce its decrees; but he also thought the Chief Secretary hardly made fair allowance for the other side of the work of the League. It was in its objects an agrarian society. It had endeavoured to deal with what had been the great evil and difficulty in Ireland—the exaction of exorbitant rents; and in this regard it had undoubtedly been successful in diminishing these exorbitant rents. It had been successful in compelling the attention of Parliament and in securing a limitation of the landlords' demands. They had the well-known evidence of General Buller, quoted by the late Prime Minister, to the effect that the tenants looked to the League for salvation. They had the further fact that in Ulster, where the League was not powerful, there were no reductions. Therefore the Proclamation of the League and this debate must be looked upon as a development of the situation, and as, to all intents and purposes, part and parcel and the continuation of the debates and discussions on the Crimes Act. During the progress of that Bill it was frequently disclaimed by the Irish Secretary and others that the Bill was aimed against combinations, but against crime. The case for suspending the Constitutional liberties of the subject must be one of overwhelming necessity, of convincing evidence of the wide prevalence and intensity of crime. He thought when the Crimes Act was brought forward they did not find in the speech of the Chief Secretary, or the speeches of other Members of the Government, that a case of this overwhelming necessity was presented. They had now on all sides testimony, including that of the Member for West Birmingham, that Ireland was at present conspicuously free from serious crime, and that that was the case one could see from the evidence of this very Proclamation, because the National League was proclaimed under Sub-section "D" of Section 6—namely, for promoting and inciting to acts of violence and intimidation; and under part of Sub-section "E," as to interfering with the administration of the law. The Proclamation passed over the first three sub-sections, which dealt with a question of crime. The Government did not say that the National League was framed for the commission of crime, or carried on operations by means of crime; and, more than that, the Proclamation did not even include the second part of Sub-section "E," and did not say that the National League was disturbing the maintenance of law and order in Ireland. That, he thought, was a very serious consideration for hon. Members when they had to determine how they were to vote on this question. The Government had proposed the Proclamation of the League as encouraging Boycotting and intimidation, and hon. Members had to ask themselves was it likely they would succeed in the object they had in view? It would be absurd in anyone to refrain from regretting and denouncing the tyrannical Boycotting and intimidation that went on in Ireland, and no man could view it with greater indignation than he did. But they had really to look at this point. Was the action which the Government were taking likely to succeed in putting down Boycotting? He believed they had ample evidence to the contrary. They had the evidence of Lord Salisbury in his speech at Newport, the evidence of Lord Spencer, the evidence before the Cowper Commission, and particularly that of Captain Plunkett, who distinctly stated that Boycotting under the Crimes Act of 1882 was as strong as it is now. If they were to get rid of Boycotting and intimidation, they must alter the conditions under which they took place. Then they had to ask themselves, was it likely that the action of the Government would diminish the political power of the League? Here, again, he thought the experience of recent history would give a negative reply. The political power of the hon. Member for Cork and his Friends was more than doubled and quadrupled after the Government of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian had put them in prison and proclaimed the Land League. Then there was the further question, was the Proclamation of the League likely to bring us nearer a final and satisfactory settlement of our Irish difficulties? Would it postpone or hasten it? Here, again, he thought they had only to appeal to recent experience. There were people in this country who were not keen Party politicians, but who were very effective in bringing about decisions at General Elections. He thought these people would look at the question mainly from this point of view—they would look at what had taken place during this Session —at the time spent on the passing of the Crimes Act, upon the work the House was now engaged in, and upon the future difficulties which would come in the way of the Government in carrying out the policy they were now embarking upon. Because it was to be blind to all their experiences from 1882 not to feel that the difficulties of the Government were just beginning now that they had proclaimed the National League. It was customary to sneer when politicians put the issue that was now before them as an issue between conciliation and coercion. He put it to hon. Friends on that side, and also to Conservative Members on the opposite side, was it not the case that at the last General Election there was a very general repudiation of any desire to return to the old policy of endeavouring to rule Ireland with the high hand; and was there not also this positive resolution at the last General Election, that, however much they differed as to the proposals made by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, they all came there with the primary duty imposed upon them of endeavouring so far as in them lay to attain, within certain well-defined limits, under safe and reasonable conditions, a settlement for Ireland which, above all things, should be an amicable settlement? In view of that, what they were now proposing to do, and had been doing, was a fearful commentary. The policy of the Government was not at all likely to bring about any such amicable settlement. He viewed with particular regret the line which had been taken up by his noble Friend near him (Viscount Ebrington) and by several other Liberal Colleagues who, like himself, voted against the Home Rule Bill. They had looked forward as one of their primary duties to arrive at an amicable settlement for Ireland, and they considered that the best means of attaining that would be the influence of these hon. Gentlemen and noble Lords, and particularly of the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington), whom they all respected and admired, in carrying out the object which he had so much at heart. He thought it was patent that what was being done now by those hon. Members would hardly tend to increase the power with which they would be able to press their views. He hoped, even at that eleventh hour, that when they were away from the heated atmosphere of that House the noble Lord and his followers would look at it differently, and would yet be found working with the view of obtaining the only satisfactory settlement. He had never before spoken on Irish affairs, but he did not wish to give a silent vote on this question, because it seemed to him that the policy which had been adopted and was being pursued by Her Majesty's Government would undoubtedly indefinately postpone and make infinitely more difficult that amicable settlement for Ireland to which they all looked; because he was convinced the policy of Her Majesty's Government had tended to stir up again the embers of political hatred and animosity, and that spirit of antagonism of which they had so vivid a recollection in the Parliament of 1880. It was for these reasons that he should vote in favour of the Motion of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) said, that for several reasons he should have preferred to give a silent vote on this occasion; but after the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), at the close of which the right hon. Gentleman made pointed reference to a speech which he (Mr. T. W. Russell) made in this House, he found it absolutely impossible to give a silent vote as he had desired to do. Now, the Irish National League did some work of which he cordially approved, although he objected very much to its methods; it did another class of work of which he totally disapproved. The right hon. Member for Mid Lothian quoted him as a witness of the good that the League had done in Ireland. The right hon. Gentleman called him a hostile witness; and what were the words which he quoted? They were words he made use of in the debate on the second reading of the Irish Land Law Bill, and the substance of them was as follows:—"In the Provinces of Leinster, Munster, and Connaught intimidation and outrage had done their work, and abatements of rent had been given in these Provinces; whereas, in the Province of Ulster, where intimidation and outrage had not been prevalent, little or no abatement had been given." And that was what the right hon. Gentleman chose to call a character for the National League! What did it mean? He had never dared to say that the National League was the author of that intimidation and outrage—that was left for the right hon. Gentleman. The right hon. Gentleman took him a long way further than he went, and upon his shoulders must lie the responsibility for that journey. There was another point on which he desired to join issue with the right hon. Gentleman. If the National League were an organization to protect the Irish tenant farmers from unjust rents, and prosecuted that work by fair means, he should join it and be an active member. Taking it to be an association with that object in view, what were its admitted methods? The right hon. Member for Mid Lothian talked about "exclusive dealing" as the method of the National League. When, and by whom, was this phrase invented? That was not the phrase the right hon. Gentleman used in 1882 when dealing with this matter. For himself, he objected to the phrase. The methods of the National League involved exclusive dealings and very much more. The right hon. Gentleman, in 1882, when he dealt with this very subject, used very different language. Speaking on the 24th of May, 1882, in this House, the right hon. Gentleman asked this question—"What is meant by Boycotting?" They had never heard then of the phrase "exclusive dealing." They had the honest name put upon it—Boycotting. "In the first place," the right hon. Gentleman said—

> "It is combined intimidation. In the second place, it is combined intimidation made use of for the purpose of destroying private liberty of choice by fear of ruin and starvation. In the third place, that being what Boycotting is in itself, we must look to this—that the creed of Boycotting, like every other creed, requires a sanction; and the sanction of Boycotting, that which stands in the rear of Boycotting, and by which alone Boycotting can in the long run be made thoroughly effective, is the murder which is not to be denounced."—(3 *Hansard*, [269] 1551.)

That was the way in which the right hon. Gentleman spoke when he, as Prime Minister, had to deal with this very evil. Now, what were the facts which the House had before it to-night? They had it stated by the responsible Minister of the Government that there were 5,000 people Boycotted in Ireland in this inhuman way. What did it mean? Not exclusive dealing alone. It meant what the hon. Member for Cork called it in the town of Ennis when he invented it and set it afloat. It meant moral leprosy. It meant that where it did not mean outrage and intimidation and murder. Now, he was told that the Primrose League in England practised exclusive dealing. It was absurd for grown men to be talking stuff of this kind—literally absurd. He admitted the charge of exclusive dealing as freely as they liked—he would make hon. Gentleman below the Gangway a present of it. But what stood behind the exclusive dealing of the Primrose League? Was there the bullet of the assassin? [A Home Rule MEMBER: Stuff!] Was there the marching of the midnight marauder? Was there the trampling out of all human freedom if one did not obey its orders? Nothing of the kind. He repeated that it was absolutely farcical for grown men to compare the Primrose League or any other political organization in England with the National League in Ireland. He objected to its methods *in toto*. It was an organization for literally stamping out all human freedom. He did not object to combination; very far from it; but he did object to men combining to prevent him doing what he had a right to do. The National League was an organization the main object of which was to produce a dull level of uniformity by absolute force. It would not be possible to establish such an organization in any part of the Empire where free-born men lived, and it was only possible in Ireland, where the virtue of obedience had been taught as the one supreme duty of life. [An hon. MEMBER: Obedience to authority.] Obedience to authority! He was not going to bow down to any such authority. Let them look at its operations. He would quote some cases from National League newspapers, and if they were wrong, on the League be the responsibility. *The Munster Express* on the 9th of July reported the proceedings of a branch of the League at which attention was called to the fact that a Mr. Edward O'Brien had had in his employment for three weeks a stonemason (Paddy Norris) who was one of the most notorious Emergency men in that part; and the secretary reported that he had called the employer's attention to the fact, and had received from him a note stating that the man was prepared to join the League, and if the League would not have him as a member he should be dismissed on the completion of his contract. This stonemason, he contended, had a right to follow his occupation without any profession of political faith being extorted from him. It was this stamping out of human freedom that had kept many from supporting the work of the League in other directions. He was for convincing men that they were wrong; but the League represented coercion of the meanest and most detestable kind. Another instance he would quote would show cause and effect. *The Clare Advertiser* of the 27th of June last reported the usual fortnightly meeting of the Kilrush branch of the National League, at which Mr. John M. Nagle delivered an impassioned address on the necessity of drawing the line of demarcation between real, pure-souled Leaguers and the execrable class of rent-warners, whom the speaker denounced as worse than Judas Iscariot; that was the cause, and the effect was found in *The Irish Times* of the 19th of August, which stated that printed notices were posted in the district threatening Ned Kennedy, a rent-warner for Mr. J. Vesey Fitzgerald, D.L., that he would be shot if he did not give up a farm from which a widow had been evicted. This was a literal instance of cause and effect. and it was childish to say that the Primrose League or any English association carried on proceedings of this kind. If it did, how long would it exist? The right hon. Member for Mid Lothian had said there were 500,000 members of the League in Ireland, and no doubt he was right; but perhaps the House would like to know how the membership was made up. In June *The Munster Express* reported the meeting of a branch, at which a resolution was passed to the effect that all farmers' sons already admitted be expelled unless their parents became members of the League. What did the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) think of this stamping out of all human freedom? A Sligo paper of the 9th of July recorded the passing at a League meeting of a resolution that each member of the committee was strictly required to furnish a complete list of those in his district who had not joined the branch, and it was significantly added—"Those outside our ranks will please take note." [Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: Hear, hear!] If the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby, instead of being what he was, were an Irish peasant, and had got a notice of that kind served upon him, he was quite certain the effect would be that he would join the League, or, indeed, any League under Heaven; for any man getting a notice of that kind would know perfectly well what it meant. That was the way the membership of the League was made up, and for the Secretary to stand up in the House and declare that no compulsion was used and that the central bodies saw that none was used was to go against facts piled mountains high.

MR. T. C. HARRINGTON: Does the hon. Member mean to say that I stated in this House what I did not believe to be true?

MR. T. W. RUSSELL said, that for the hon. Member to stand up in the House and state that no man was compelled to join the National League, and that the central branch prohibited that sort of thing, was to go in the teeth of evidence piled mountains high. He objected to the National League.

MR. T. C. HARRINGTON: And they object to you.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL said, he had no doubt they objected to him very much. He objected to the National League because it usurped the functions of the law. He had heard it denied that League Courts were held; but *The Leinster Leader* of the 11th of June last reported the meeting of a branch at which it was resolved to summon to the next meeting some turf-bank grabbers to explain their conduct. [Mr. WALLACE: Hear, hear!] A man who was described as a grabber was one who had taken a turf bank and paid for it; and no organization had a right to summon such a purchaser. The hon. Member who said "Hear, hear!" came from the same county as himself, and knew that nothing of this kind would be tolerated in Scotland for a moment. *The Wexford People* of the 9th of July reported the meeting of a branch at which the conduct of a man was described as reprehensible, because he had violated an important resolution of the New Ross Convention, and yet had the audacity to attack a respectable member of the committee who reported him; and he was required to attend and apologize or to take the consequences. He had quoted these examples out of hundreds he had in his possession, and all had occurred since June, 1887. On every Sunday 1,800 meetings were held in Ireland, and they were attended by men who investigated the affairs of the neighbourhood and pronounced and executed judgment upon the people. He should oppose the Resolution of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian, and for more reasons than one. One reason was that he supported the Crimes Bill. He did so because he thought the Government had made out a case for it, because he knew the facts from his own knowledge, and because he believed that Bill to represent the least that any responsible Government could do. But he wished Parliament had not been called upon to give its sanction to this Proclamation. He wished the Government had seen their way to rely upon the Summary Jurisdiction and the other clauses of the Act to repress disorder. He wished they had given the Land Act, such as it was, a reasonable chance, instead of asking the House to take a seat on this switchback railway to be driven Heaven knows where. But the Government asked Parliament for authority to act if it were necessary, and they had larger knowledge than an individual Member, and were responsible for the peace of Ireland. He, at all events, having voted for the Crimes Act, did not see his way Constitutionally to refuse them the powers they asked for. He could not say he should vote in favour of the Proclamation with a light heart; very far from it. He saw nothing but clouds and darkness all around. We had lost a golden opportunity which was granted to us as by miracle, and the Chief Secretary might possibly need this power and more. He, however, gave his vote without any hesitation. He believed the National League to be a competitor with the Government of the Queen in Ireland. We could not have two Governments in any country; the people could not serve two masters. As he was not prepared to hand over the people he represented to the tender mercies of the League he should give his vote against the Motion.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) said, that a great part of the discussion had been, if not irrelevant, at all events superfluous. Too much stress had been laid upon that portion of the debate relating to Boycotting; too little on the connection of that with the present Proclamation under Section 6, sub-sections (*d*) and (*e*) of the Coercion Act. So far as Boycotting was concerned, it could be punished under Section 2, and the Proclamation was unnecessary if Boycotting was the evil sought to be reached. Boycotting was not the invention of the National League, nor of the Land League which preceded it. Boycotting was not the invention of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell), as had been alleged. It had formed part of the history of Ireland for a long while, and had been introduced by the English. Not one at all conversant with the history of our connection with that country could fail to know by what varied forms of law we had tried to exterminate the Irish people—by the most scientific processes of legal Boycotting. He was not now referring to the later and most infamous Penal Laws by which Catholics were Boycotted, but to our earlier legislation. We had, for instance, forbidden marriage or trading with the Irish. Boycotting was not quite unknown in England. Since he had been referred to personally in the debate, he might obtrude a personal matter upon the House, and point out that he himself had had some experience of it during the past seven years. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) had quoted the case of one Justin M'Carthy, Boycotted because he was the son of another Justin M'Carthy. He (Mr. Bradlaugh) had seen on the Books of the House for months a proposal to Boycott his own two daughters, a proposal to prevent them from earning their livelihood as teachers at South Kensington, because they were his daughters; and that was actually formally moved in that House. Attempts had even been made to Boycott the voters and traders in the town which he had the honour to represent, because it had returned him to Parliament. Those who had voted for him at Northampton had been Boycotted, and paragraphs had been sent round asking the leather sellers not to deal with his supporters; and yet he had never heard a word of blame from hon. Members opposite with regard to any of these cases, although the effect had been to saddle him with nearly £3,000 of debt. He certainly should not now defend Boycotting; he had suffered too much from it personally. But the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell) said that there was a difference between the Boycotting of the Primrose League and the Boycotting of the National League, because there was not the bullet of the assassin behind the former. Did the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary think that the bullet of the assassin was behind the Boycotting of the National League? If he did, why was he so half-hearted, and why did he not proclaim it under Subsections *a*, *b*, and *c* as an association for the commission of crime, or for procuring and abetting crime and outrage? The right hon. Gentleman asked the House to be a party to what, for his (Mr. Bradlaugh's) own part, he would call a criminality against the Irish people; and if they were asked to accept as evidence the statements which had been brought forward, it should, at least, be made clear to them that these things were now being done by the League. The question before them was this—Were they, or were they not, to acquiesce in and endorse the Proclamation which the Government had thought fit to issue at the present moment? The House could not acquit itself of the responsibility. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) had alleged that the House was ignorant of the facts which, if they existed, and if the House knew them, might warrant such a Proclamation. The Chief Secretary had answered by a statement founded in part upon Press paragraphs, and partly on some Returns to which he had not specifically referred, but chiefly upon official information, the sources of which were peculiar to himself. The right hon. Gentleman had told them that his sources of information were, in the main, accessible to Members of that House; but it was hardly possible for them to obtain all these scissors-and-paste cuttings from various journals. The evidence which had been brought forward by the right hon. Gentleman was not the kind of evidence upon which, as judges by their sentence, they ought to be called upon to take away the liberties of a people. He protested against this light-hearted method of dealing with so great a question. This evidence was not, in the main, accessible to them; it was only accessible to them through the right hon. Gentleman himself. The right hon. Gentleman told them that if the Returns had been laid on the Table, those Returns would have had the same authority, and would have been the same.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: It happened that I quoted certain facts upon official information, and hon. Members below the Gangway jeered. I reminded the House that if the Returns had been laid on the Table, they would have been derived from the same authority as that which had been attacked by hon. Members below the Gangway.

Mr. BRADLAUGH said, that was practically what he had said. What they now wanted was to examine this evidence at their leisure. It was impossible to follow and judicially weigh it as delivered in the speech of the Chief Secretary. Then the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary had made an astounding statement as to a matter which had occurred on the 10th of November, 1884, which he had brought down to the present time. The right hon. Gentleman had used the expression that he had carried the matter through for eight months consecutively; but it was difficult to make out where these eight months came in, according to the explanation of the right hon. Gentleman. The right hon. Gentleman had named no year with regard to this matter except the first; and he thought, also, that the right hon. Gentleman had said that he did not intend to take any case except those of the present year.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said that the Boycotting had begun in 1884, but had come down to the present date.

Mr. BRADLAUGH said, that in some cases the right hon. Gentleman went back years before the National League existed. ["No, no!"] The Government had had this information when they were in Office before, and had declared that they only intended to enforce the ordinary law; therefore they had either kept back facts which would have then warranted a Coercion Bill, or else they had no right to go back to them now. Some of the vague cases he quoted were not sufficient evidence to hang a cat on, much less to take away the liberties of a people. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary, referring to the evictions which had taken place, had said some of the hardships were real, some of them invented, but that the evictions themselves had all been the result of the action of the National League.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Not all.

MR. BRADLAUGH said, he was sorry that he had not caught the limitation in the right hon. Gentleman's speech. But how many of those evictions were consequential on the action of the League? If only some of them, it would surely have been better to specify the cases so that they might be examined. Why was the League now proclaimed? The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) considered that the Proclamation was unnecessary; but he (Mr. Bradlaugh) did not know whether the right hon. Gentleman intended to give effect to his speech in the Lobby, or whether he meant it as a phrase to soften himself with the electors. The right hon. Member for West Birmingham had stated last Saturday that it was an open secret that the Liberal Unionist Leaders—and presumably this included the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale—had protested against the intention of the Government to proclaim the League. The Chief Secretary spoke of the verdict of that House, and of the verdict of the country. He (Mr. Bradlaugh) quite admitted that the verdict of the House of Commons would be against them; but the verdict of the country was declaring itself in an opposite direction. *The Times* had been pressing for the Proclamation of the League for a long time, and why did the Government proclaim it now? Right hon. Gentlemen on the Treasury Bench said that they waited until the Land Act had been passed; but did they not rather wait until they had been compelled by certain circumstances to proclaim it? Did the right hon. Gentleman anticipate that the Government would proclaim the League when he said that he did not expect that he should have to make such an announcement? If, when he made that statement, he did expect to make such an announcement, there was certainly a Machiavellian use of language which he (Mr. Bradlaugh) did not anticipate from the right hon. Gentleman. It showed that the right hon. Gentleman's language, to an untrained mind like his, meant one thing, and to the right hon. Gentleman's subtle mind meant something else. He believed that originally the Government did not intend to proclaim the League; and it was not until lately, when elections had gone against them, when they found that the Liberal Unionists did not count for much, but were being rejected one after the other, and that real, true, old-branded Toryism might figure the best after all, that they turned round, and had determined to pursue their present policy. The great Unionist Party was breaking up rapidly; but there were enough of them in that House at present for mischief. The verdict of the House would be, no doubt, what the Chief Secretary anticipated; but the verdict of the people was being formulated. There was no great town in the whole of England, Scotland, or Wales, where they could get a mass of people together—untrained, rough, and poor, if they chose to call them so, but earnest and liberty-loving, as he would declare them—who would not say that the Government had got a measure from the House of Commons under the pretence of preventing crime, and were now using it to try and crush a political organization to which they were opposed, and of which they were afraid.

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON) (Bute): The present position of the debate affords a satisfactory explanation of a problem which must have attracted the curiosity and surprise of those who read the Notice Paper. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) has not in his Motion challenged the grounds or the merits upon which the League has been proclaimed. He has not asked the House to assert that there did not exist grounds upon which it ought to be proclaimed. But he has cautiously confined his Resolution to this one point, that no information has been furnished to Parliament to justify the issue of the Proclamation. So far as the terms of the Resolution are concerned anyone would be entitled to vote and might be induced to vote in favour of it who knew by ocular demonstration and by the testimony of his own ears that intimidation and incitement to violence are the daily rules of the National League. It is upon a mere question of etiquette that the House is asked to pass this Resolution, or at all events, that weak-kneed Members may be induced to vote for it upon the mere point of ceremony. It happens that in the interpretation which the right hon. Gentleman has put upon the Statute he has plainly erred. The right hon. Gentleman has asserted that the Statute entrusted not to the Government, but to the Government conjointly with Parliament, the duty of determining whether a society ought to be proclaimed. That is not the case.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: I never said so.

Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: What the Statute prescribes is that it shall be the duty of the Executive Government to exercise the power of proclaiming a society as dangerous, and that the right of Parliament should be only to intervene by way of protest or veto if and when they are satisfied that the Executive has gone wrong. That, I assert in the presence of any hon. Members who are conversant with the Statutes, to be not merely the Statute Law, but the Constitutional Law of the question, and I mention it not for the purpose of evading what is the ultimate question of debate—the demerits of the National League—but rather because I see that the form of the Resolution has been adopted for a more subtle and definite purpose — the purpose of endeavouring to show that the Government was bound to put on the Table of the House demonstrations of the guilt of the National League, of inducing the House to suppose that unless and until that formal condition of things has been satisfied, the House was not entitled to go on what I will call the notoriety of the case. Now I propose to make good certain definite and grave charges against the League. I shall do so by one kind of evidence and one only, and I shall confine that evidence to one period and one only. The kind of evidence I shall use will be the evidence of local newspapers published in the centre of districts affected by the transactions recorded in those newspapers, some of which newspapers are in the interests of and some under the inspiration of the National League. The right hon. Gentleman has such political relations with hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway that no proprieties would have been violated if he had endeavoured to ascertain directly the facts of this matter. It would not have been beneath the dignity of a statesman to ascertain whether the concourse of evidence from all parts of the Provinces infected with this crime does not show that week by week it was published, not as matter of contrition, but as matter of pride and proclamation, that the League was actually using these powers of intimidation which the Government now seek to bring home to them. These transactions have been taking place day by day down to date. We do not desire to ransack the period when hon. Gentlemen opposite were using measures quite as stringent against a similar organization; but we need only refer to the records of the last few months. The records of the past few months have a certain element of especial value. The progress made with the Criminal Law Amendment Bill through Parliament before the month of June was such that it was pretty certain what was coming, and it is one of the few features to the credit of the National League that I know of that they continued to let their organs promulgate their decisions. Those who condemn the Proclamation of the League are bound to found themselves upon the facts of the case. They have not done so.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: We are not bound to prove a negative.

Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: The National League has been proclaimed upon certain definite grounds. A selection of the grounds on which it might be legally proclaimed has been made, and it has been proclaimed on some of these grounds—namely, that "it promotes or incites to acts of violence and intimidation and interferes with the administration of the law." Will any hon. or right hon. Gentleman opposite deny that, week after week, the Nationalist papers contained reports of resolutions enjoining the Boycotting of individuals? The fact cannot be denied, and was, indeed, admitted by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian. The accusation against the National League, then, is quite specific, so specific that the League is thereby put upon its defence. The headquarters of the League are in Dublin. Let its resolutions be produced condemning the Boycotting which it knew that its branches throughout the country were carrying out. I have been struck with the remarkable ingenuity of the defence that has been set up by the League, upon which the task of demonstrating its innocence is thrown by the strong *primâ facie* case that has been made out against it. That *primâ facie* case having been made out by the puplished records of its proceedings, it is for the League to make out its defence. No one knows this better than the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian. I listened to the right hon. Gentleman with the closest attention, and I was struck with the proportion of time which he allocated to different topics of his speech. He devoted half-an-hour to declaiming against the Act under which this Proclamation is issued, introducing much that was altogether irrelevant to the subject, and he closed with a most eloquent and impressive adjuration to Irishmen to undergo the trials imposed upon Ireland by the wickedness of Parliament, and also with an admonition to Parliament to mend its ways. In the middle of these magnificent passages he interposed 10 minutes devoted to what he apologetically described as "the delicate subject" of the National League. No doubt, it was a very delicate subject to the right hon. Gentleman; but it was the only subject of this debate. The hon. Member for West Kerry (Mr. E. Harrington) next undertook the defence of the League, and what did his defence amount to? The Chief Secretary had brought forward instance after instance of cases where the branches of the National League had passed resolutions recommending the Boycotting of certain persons, and punishing people for not complying with them. The answer of the hon. Member was that the local papers were unreliable.

MR. EDWARD HARRINGTON: I pointed out that the Chief Secretary had on previous occasions stated that they were not reliable.

MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: The hon. Member will not now admit that he said the local papers were unreliable. Then he admitted that they are reliable. The hon. Member, following the example of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, next attempted to argue that if the National League offended it had a consuetudinary right to offend, and that it had been so long in existence that its defects might be treated with leniency. That was also the argument of the right hon. Gentleman, who was "to its faults a little blind, and to its merits very kind." "Considering the enormous advantages which it confers on the country," the right hon. Gentleman seemed to argue, "you must submit to a little percentage of disadvantage." The next point of defence urged was that certain rebukes had been administered by the Central Body to the county branches. It would be interesting to know a little more about these rebukes—to know in what spirit they were given, and in what spirit they were understood. Then the last resource of a bad case was brought forward, and it was said that "other people do the same." [*Laughter.*] I am surprised to find the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) resorting to that peculiarly antiquarian form of defence. The Government, I think, had good reason to congratulate themselves that at last, in the full light of discussion in this House, it is admitted on all hands that the National League did incite to intimidation. I have not heard it denied by any hon. Member on the opposite Benches that the National League did incite to acts of intimidation. That is a fact upon which the people of this country will form their judgment; they will be guided not a little by the fact that both sides of the House are agreed that it can be affirmatively asserted that the League does promote intimidation. I challenge any hon. or right hon. Gentleman to deny it. They may say there is only a little of it; that it is more than counterbalanced by the good that is done; that other people do the same thing; that otherwise the League has a most excellent character; but as to the fact itself they must plead guilty. No hon. Member, either above or below the Gangway, has gainsaid the assertion of intimidation. The system of intimidation pursued by the League is this. In the first place, each branch of the League coerces the people of the district into membership with it. Then it coerces those who disobey its rules and regulations. But what of those who stay outside? Their names are read at the meetings of the League. I will show presently that the vague class called "objectionable persons," or "obnoxious persons," constitute a special category. I will make another assertion as to the proceedings of these branches of the League, upon which I challenge contradiction. The meetings are generally held on Sunday. The better the day, the better the deed. They began by a sort of commination service for obnoxious persons. *The Wexford People* of August 30, 1887, stated that at the meeting of the branch of the National League at Gorey "the usual list of objectionable parties was read, and then the meeting proceeded to business." Now, I will ask the House if that complete separation of the sheep and the goats has not some sort of effect upon persons in the latter category, and whether it does not induce some sort of compliance, and bring them into what the Americans call "the third class," included among the sheep, goats, and alpacas? Accordingly, some further development of the species took place until the transformation was complete. I propose to offer for the consideration of hon. Gentlemen opposite certain authorities in support of my statement. I am dealing with the composition of the National League, and I assert that coercion was the first means by which the National League was recruited. I am going to show afterwards—I hope I am not intruding too much on the attention of the House—what they did with their Members when they got them inside. I should like to offer hon. Gentlemen opposite some evidence in support of what I say. The Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant brought forward a mass of evidence, as to which I will say that hon. Gentlemen opposite who listened to it candidly must admit that it was very grave evidence. But a cavil has been raised from the Bench opposite upon what is represented as a Constitutional principle, that some of the documents ought to be accessible to Parliament. Encouraged by that, and by the hon. Member for West Kerry, who certifies to the reliability of the local newspapers, I propose, by the citation of two or three extracts, to support the propositions I have stated. In the first place, I maintain that it was by a well-organized system of compulsion and threats addressed to those who remained outside that the National League was recruited. I will give the name of the branch and the newspaper from which the extracts are taken.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): May I ask whether the hon. and learned Gentleman is quoting from the newspapers themselves, or from a collection of extracts made by third parties?

Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: I am quoting from a collection of extracts from newspapers made by third parties. That is not a matter on which the issue between myself and hon. Members opposite is to be decided by a snap observation of that kind. The country will judge between us. I will in every instance give the date of the newspaper, and hon. Members can look up the extracts. *The Munster News* of July 13, 1887, says that a resolution was passed at a meeting of the branch of the National League at Ballingarry calling upon Members of the branch who have been previously enrolled to rejoin at once, as a stringent resolution similar to that of last year would be enforced—that is, that the people were not to have any communication or dealing with any persons holding aloof from the National League at this crisis. The next paper I will quote from is *The Anglo-Celt* of June 18; "Labby" was the name of the branch. A resolution was passed calling on members to pay up the new subscriptions, and adding—"We must regard those who are not with us in the coming hour of trial as against us." Then there is a resolution which has been already quoted from *The Tipperary Nationalist* of July 23, 1887, to the effect that the branch—

> "Would strongly impress upon its members who may have occasion to employ an auctioneer to give their business to those who are members of the National League,"

adding that—

> "He is no patriot, and unworthy of the name of an Irishman, who would support the enemies of his country in preference to its friends."

The Dundalk Democrat of the 20th of June, 1887, contains this passage in reference to the Tallanstown branch—

> "We believe the Irishmen of to-day who in times to come will be unable to show his card of membership for 1887—for the year memorable for campaigning and struggling for life of the unfortunate Irish peasantry—for the revival of priest hunting and the suicide of landlordism—we believe such delinquent must in future be regarded as a traitor and a coward,

as worth being shunned, and unfit to be ever trusted."

The hon. Member for West Kerry made a suggestion—indeed, the hon. Member asserted nothing, everything was by way of suggestion—that, after all, hard words do not break any bones, and that these resolutions were not followed up; but I want to show what is the effect on the daily life of these persons. I think that hon. Members who heard the speech of the Chief Secretary will not accept that view of the matter. One other instance I will give. In *The Sligo Champion* of July 2 appeared the following announcement from a local branch of the League:—

> "We respectfully call upon all strangers coming to reside in this parish during the summer months not to lodge with any householder who cannot produce his card of membership for 1887."

The organization of the League is so zealously worked by those who are at the wheel that it grinds to powder those who come within reach. The League has its Courts which issue citations and treat as defaulters those who do not appear to answer. These Courts copy the subtleties and even the mannerisms of Courts of Law, and they actually have a civil side and a criminal side. On the civil side they fix the rents of holdings, and there is a case recorded in which a Court sanctioned the sale of an evicted farm upon most peculiar conditions. They fix the rents for particular holdings not by arbitration; but the ordinary *cursus curiæ* is to settle the rent and compel payment. [An IRISH MEMBER: Give the figures.] As to that, I shall use my own discretion. On the criminal side these Courts punish as criminals persons who do certain things which the law allows them to do, and they even treat as crimes things which the law not merely allows, but actually enjoins. To take a farm in contravention of the rules of the League is an offence, and it is even an offence to take it with the consent of the evicted tenant. But this system of jurisprudence has arrived at a state of still greater refinement, for it may even be an offence for a man to retake his own land. In case the Central Authorities in Dublin may wish to rebuke those who are responsible for this particular development of the League law I will name the source whence my information was derived. It is *The Munster Express* of July 30. [An hon. MEMBER: A landlord's organ.] Well, the matter is easily susceptible of a verification. The cases are reported, and it can easily be found out if they are true or not. I will go on with my catalogue. It is superfluous to say that so grave an offence as herding on an evicted farm is heavily punished. It is also a punishable offence to send cattle to graze on the lands of A. B., even when the reasons why A. B. is objectionable are not stated. To use the machine of an obnoxious individual is, of course, a cognizable offence, and the reciprocal act of lending a machine to an obnoxious individual ranks in the same category. Selling cattle to a land corporation is in certain circumstances a cognizable offence, and I find that it is a high crime to drink with the son of a grabber, and equally culpable to court his daughter. My authority for making these assertions are *The Kerry Sentinel* of August 5, *The Kilkenny Journal* of July 20, *The Munster Express* of July 23, *The Leinster Leader* of July 10, *The Tipperary Nationalist* of July 16, *The Tuam News* of August 5, *The New Ross Standard* of July 25, and *The Wexford People* of July 9, and a paper which reports the proceedings of the Carrick-on-Suir branch. I have, I think, fulfilled my promise to supply the House with a reference to every case I have cited. It is beyond the power of hon. Members opposite to contend with any degree of success that the cases to which I have referred, and for which I have adduced authorities, are mere isolated cases, or are the result of action unauthorized by the National League. I shall be able by-and-bye to show that not only was the organization between the different branches of the League complete, but that there was constant supervision from above—a fact that is perfectly well known to hon. Members below the Gangway opposite. Under such a state of things it can scarcely be denied that personal freedom is, to say the least of it, greatly abridged. Neither can it be denied that the law of the land allows people to do that which the National League forbids them to do. Hon. Members may, perhaps, think that it is a small and trivial thing that a man is forbidden to graze his cattle upon particular land; that he cannot use farm machinery belonging to a particular person; or that he cannot hire a gig unless it belongs to the right people. But these comparatively small and humble matters become of the greatest importance, when they are the beginning and the end of a man's existence, and when the denial of his right to act as he chooses constitutes a total eclipse of his liberty in Ireland. What would have been said if action of this sort had been taken, not by an anonymous and impersonal association like the National League, but by a tyrant, or, to suppose the most invidious case, by a landlord? I think that in the circumstances I have pointed out it is quite time that the State should interfere to protect the individual. The National League, however, have gone still further, and have forbidden what the law enjoins. The law requires in Ireland, as in other parts of the United Kingdom, the payment of rates; but the National League has undertaken to regulate and to determine what rates shall or shall not be paid. *The Wexford People* of July 23, 1887, tells us that—

> "The Ramsgrange and Sutton's parish branch met on Sunday, the 17th instant, Canon Doyle in the chair. The collection of the rates occupied some attention, and the strictest vigilance is requested from all who make the collection impossible."

I now come to another and a separate point, which appears to me to be of paramount importance. One of the duties which the law enjoins upon a citizen is that he shall give evidence in a Court of Law when he is called upon to do so; but the National League have felt it necessary to remind the people of a particular district that they have confidence in them that, should the occasion arise, no one will be found who will give evidence, under any circumstances, against any of their countrymen. That is not an isolated case by any means. That is taken from *The Wexford People* of the 13th of August, 1887, and it is not an isolated case by any means.

MR. T. C. HARRINGTON: I wish to ask the hon. and learned Gentleman whether, previously to that resolution being passed, a discussion had not taken place with regard to the secret tribunal to be created under the Crimes Act?

MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: I am glad to hear that the hon. Member is so intimately acquainted with the circumstances of the case to which I am referring, as it is proof of the reliability of the newspaper from which I am quoting. In another case, which appeared in *The Roscommon Herald* of the 13th of August last, the Legan branch of the League appears to have passed a resolution binding its members to refuse to take any sort of oath under the provisions of the Crimes Act. It adds—

> "That any member taking such oath shall be looked upon as unworthy of the cause of freedom."

[*Cheers from the Irish Members.*] The importance of those cheers will not be lost upon the House. I understand, then, that it is part of the case of hon. Members below the Gangway opposite that the League does enjoin a refusal on the part of its members to take any oath under the provisions of the Crimes Act. In that case, I think there is ample justification for issuing this Proclamation. I wish to know whether the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, and the remnant of the Liberal Party who act with him, approve of those resolutions of the National League? Is it a fact that the National League, by their branches and their Parliamentary Representatives, have enjoined the peasantry of Ireland not to give evidence before the legal tribunals? That fact alone convicts the National League of being a body which interferes with the administration of the law. I have been struck with the very remarkable absence of any definite expression of opinion as to the grounds on which this resolution is to be supported. I cannot discover whether right hon. Gentlemen opposite are agreed in supporting hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway in justifying the National League in these extreme acts, or whether they deny those acts altogether. I suspect that the latter alternative is no longer open to them, and that the evidence brought forward by the extracts quoted, and, most important of all, the cheers just given, show that the facts are past praying for, and that it must be some collateral reason which induces them to oppose the Proclamation of the National League. The Government does not at all shut its eyes to the gravity of the duty which it has undertaken; but, at the same time, we shall look for support in this crisis to a spirit somewhat different from that which animated not the least eloquent part of the speech of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian. The right hon. Gentleman was eloquent; but he put the bridle on the back of his eloquence when he was denouncing the law; he was precise, cautious, guarded, when he was rebuking what was illegal; there was not the slightest tendency to exaggeration or amplitude of statement when he was explaining—what certainly required to be explained—that he was opposed to Boycotting. But no language was too strong for him to inform the House and, let me add, the people of Ireland, what he thinks of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, and also the law as it has hitherto prevailed in Ireland. I was struck when I heard the right hon. Gentleman say of the Crimes Act that it was a most dangerous and a most disgraceful assumption of power. I could quite understand the expression of that opinion at the right time; but it hardly fits in with a pathetic admonition to the Irish people to undergo what is to be put upon them. The right hon. Gentleman said, further, that law itself in Ireland has been made an outrage on the people, and that the law itself has a character to retrieve, as much as the Moonlighters and Boycotters; and he said, further, that in Ireland the law is still upon its trial. Does he wish well to this disgraceful assumption of power, to this outrage upon the people? I confess that I am glad that in the coming crisis the people of Ireland, in their ultimate and highest interests, will have better support than those expressions of a doubtful and half-hearted hope that law will pass through this trial. I believe that the people of Great Britain and this present Parliament will represent the ultimate judgment of those whose consideration will ever be applied to this question in deciding that, not merely by way of resenting an affront on law and its dethronement, but by securing the ultimate welfare of the country, the duty which the Government has undertaken is not only justifiable but indispensable.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): I have to congratulate the hon. and learned Gentleman who has just sat down upon the excellent spirit and the pleasant humour in which he has defended the abrogation of the liberties of the Irish people. The hon. and learned Gentleman has advocated the tremendous and terrible scourge for the country. I must say with regard to the hon. and learned Gentleman that his intervention in the debate rather augments than decreases the question which many of us have been asking ourselves in the course of the last and the present Session. Several times in the course of the present Session there have been Scotch Bills before this House. With regard to these Scotch Bills the hon. and learned Gentleman has been obstinately and modestly silent. Whenever a Scotch Bill has been before the House, the hon. and learned Gentleman has not been satisfied with maintaining silence with regard to it; but, as a matter of fact, he has removed himself as far as the limits of the Treasury Bench would allow from his right hon. and learned Colleague the Lord Advocate, so as to show that he would not have hand, act, or part in the legislation. I do not suppose that the reason for his non-intervention in Scotch debates is a want of self-esteem; but I would make this suggestion to the hon. and learned Gentleman, that he has not even learned to pronounce Irish names. Has the hon. and learned Gentleman ever been in Ireland in the course of his life?

MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: Yes; I have.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: How long? How many days? How many weeks? Have his visits to Ireland and his residence there even reached the magnificent total of the seven days of the Chief Secretary for Ireland? I would make this suggestion to the hon. and learned Gentleman—that if he should be mute with regard to a country which he does not know, and eloquent with regard to a country which he does know, he would understand his Parliamentary duties a little better. In the course of my observations I propose to take up several of the cases which the hon. and learned Gentleman referred to; but I intend first to make a few observations upon the manner and method in which this Proclamation has been produced. I wanted to know why the Proclamation had been so long postponed. Why was it that the Government did not bring their Proclamation forward until the dying days of an already protracted and prolonged Session? There is no necessity for bringing it forward. I will admit the whole case of the Chief Secretary for Ireland, and yet say that there was no case made out for this Proclamation. I start with this proposition, and that I admit the whole case which the Chief Secretary for Ireland tried to make, and did not make, and the whole case which the hon. and learned Gentleman the Solicitor General for Scotland tried to make, and did not make, and still this Proclamation would remain without cause and without excuse. All the cases of alleged or real intimidation, Boycotting, and interference with juries could be dealt with under other sections of the Coercion Act. So far as the case of the Government is concerned, even if their whole case was admitted, there is no case and no necessity for the Proclamation of the National League. But I will tell the House what was the necessity for the Proclamation of the League. It was a purely political necessity. I cannot give the political necessity better than in the language of one of the organs of the Tory Party. Last week there was published an article in *The Saturday Review*, and this article said of the Government—

> "It is impossible to deny that the Ministry has both in its earlier and its later tenures of Office disappointed the expectations of its friends and given occasion to the enterprize of its enemies. It is quite true that it has not done much that is particularly bad; it is 'the undone part,' not 'the petty done' which threatens in turn to undo it. The attempts to 'oblige Benson' in a new way by cooking up, or allowing to be cooked up, hybrid Liberal-Conservative measures like the Irish Land Bill and the Allotments Bill were, perhaps, inevitable in the circumstances, for the labourer and the Liberal Unionist are alike worthy of their hire. The miserable blunder of the Cass case, which has been a scandal, and which must, however it ends, almost certainly involve a miscarriage of justice, has been an example in little of the whole conduct of the Government. They form, it may be, a tolerably wise decision at first, then somebody applies pressure on the other side; then they hesitate, then they secede, and then they blunder; the conduct of business, the revision of judicial rents, the insignificant but disastrous matter just referred to, the management of tumultuous public meetings, the Horse Artillery affair, a dozen other things, have all been instances of this wobbling squeezableness."

It might have been thought that the first maxim of the political copy-book was "Stout sinning is better than ricketty righteousness;" but in the Government copy-book, at any rate, the maxim seems either not to exist or not to have been learnt. The Proclamation of the League was the "stout sinning" which the Government was prepared to adopt. The Coercion Act was a month or two in existence—they had tried two cases of intimidation under it. In one case they succeeded; in the other they failed. The Government have recently issued a summons against one of the most respected Members of the Irish Party. I wish them well of the struggle they are going into. They have issued a summons against my hon. Friend the Member for North-East Cork (Mr. W. O'Brien), for addressing a meeting in his own constituency. Well, the hon. Member for North-East Cork has struggled with many people in his time, and has never come out second best. If any other public man proves himself as formidable to the Government as my hon. Friend, they could prosecute him under certain sections of the Crimes Act without proclaiming the National League. No case for the Proclamation of the League has been made by the Chief Secretary or the Solicitor General for Scotland. They had all the newspapers in Ireland to quote from, and all the confidential Reports of the Government to quote from, yet all the cases these right hon. Gentlemen could collect to suit their purpose out of an organization with 1,700 branches, and between 200,000 or 300,000 members, were cases of intimidation, real or alleged. Is there any organization in the country in which they can find the proportion of offences so small in proportion to the number of its members? The Chief Secretary has challenged us to make any comparison between trades unions in England and the National League in Ireland. I accept the challenge. The Solicitor General for Scotland read to the House a resolution of a branch fixing the amount of rent to be paid for a certain farm. He considered that the resolution should be received with shouts of condemnation from the Irish Benches. Now, I approve of the resolution. It was a perfectly legitimate and most necessary resolution. Is it a greater crime for a number of tenants to join together and pass a resolution fixing the rent they think themselves able to pay for a farm of which they are part proprietors, the house and improvements of which have been made by themselves, than for the men of Newcastle-on-Tyne to fix the wages they consider themselves entitled to? The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary says that trade unionism in England is not accompanied by the violent intimidation existing in Ireland. I should be sorry to say that intimidation is used mainly and largely by the trade unions of England; but when you have a large organization like the trades unions wrestling with the capitalists, it is inevitable that a certain amount of crime should be committed. I see by the papers this morning that at Cradley Heath, where a chain-makers' strike is going on, two men have been brought up for intimidation, and though the case has been proved against them, they were not disgraced by being sent to gaol, but were let off with a fine, and no one thinks of standing up in this House and branding the union to which these men belong as a criminal association. In Bolton recently there were some severe and bitter riots, which necessitated the calling out of the military; but did the Chief Secretary propose that because, during a bitter struggle between master and man in Bolton there was a certain amount of disorder, that the trades unions of the whole country should be proclaimed — that everyone who called himself a trades unionist would commit an offence against the Constitution, and render himself liable to six months' imprisonment? The right hon. Gentleman referred to the amount of misery endured by a land-grabber in Ireland. In England a "knobstick" is the exact English equivalent for land-grabber, and means one who, in the face of a struggle between master and employer, deserts the cause of his fellow-workmen and goes to work for a lower wage. I can tell the House that it is as bad to be a "knobstick" in England, when a strike is going on, as a land-grabber in some parts of Ireland. When a branch of the League travels outside its proper function it receives the reprobation of the central branch; but a branch is not suppressed because it passes a resolution condemning land-grabbing. The central branch would be untrue to its principles if it suppressed a branch for passing such a resolution. I do not deny that such resolutions have been passed. We glory in it. One of our rules is that no man should take a farm from which there has been an unjust eviction, and at the same time remain a member of the National League. Everyone acquainted with the land war in Ireland should recognize the expediency and justice of such a rule in the organization. What has been the great weapon of the landlords in reducing, with the aid of the Government, the population of Ireland from 9,000,000 to 4,250,000? It was this—that as soon as a landlord evicts a tenant, justly or unjustly, he is always able to find someone else to take the farm. It was not until land-grabbers were put down that the weapon of eviction was a broken weapon, and that the tenants were enabled to live in peace. I could give many instances in which branches of the League which have Boycotted a man unjustly, and otherwise acted illegally or wrongfully, have been suppressed. I observed that the Chief Secretary alluded to none of these. Surely a man in his position should have left mere *Nisi Prius* advocacy to the Scotch Solicitor General. Where the National League is strong there is very little crime. Where the National League is weak there is much crime. If we had a map showing the proportional strength of the League in Ireland, we could not have a better guide as to where crime is rife; and where crime is rife is Kerry and the portion of Cork next to Kerry, but especially Kerry. Now, Kerry is one of the counties in Ireland in which the National League is least strong; and one of the reasons is that the Central Executive, by way of marking its reprobation of the outrages that have marked that portion of Ireland, have refused to sanction or propagate branches of the League there, and even further grants have been refused to most deserving evicted tenants in Kerry, where outrages have taken place, on the ground that these grants might be tortured by the Government, or by the people themselves in their ignorance, into a mute expression of approval of those crimes. The hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell) has declared, with more than Tory fervour, that it is nonsense to denounce the Primrose League in the same breath with the National League, because the Primrose League does not back up Boycotting by the bullet of the assassin or the marauding of the midnight murderer. I brand that statement as a foul calumny on the National League. It is the kind of statement with which the hon. Member, in his speeches through the country, tries to inoculate the mind of the people, as my hon. Friend the Member for Northwich (Mr. Brunner) and my right hon. Friend the Member for the Bridgeton Division of Glasgow (Sir George Trevelyan) can testify. Well, is it the case of the Government that the National League Boycotting is followed up by the bullet of the assassin and the marauding of the midnight murderer? It is not, for they have deliberately omitted from their Proclamation the sub-section relating to crime and incitement to crime. If the Government have abandoned that statement, it should be abandoned in the country by the supporters of the Government. They are disgraceful weapons of political warfare. At the present moment Ireland is the most crimeless country in the world, even under the most terrible provocation. In County Cavan, with a population of 129,416, there were at the last Summer Assizes three offenders for trial. In Donegal, with a population of 206,036, there were four persons for trial. There was not a single person for trial in the City of Kilkenny, with its population of 12,299. In Louth, with a population of 77,000, there were four offenders for trial; and in Mayo, with a population of 245,000, there were in all, great and little, 14 persons for trial. Yet Her Majesty's Government can talk about the bullet of the assassin and the midnight marauder! In Meath the National League is strong, and yet, out of a population of 87,000, there were only three cases to go before the Assizes, and the Judge congratulated the Grand Jury on the peaceful condition of the country. I take these facts from a pamphlet, "Coercion without Crime," which gives the charges of the Judges in the 32 counties in Ireland, and which I will commend to the attention of hon. Members. The League is strong in the County of Kilkenny, which has a population of 99,000, and at the last Assizes, Baron Dowse, addressing the Grand Jury, said—

> "I am very glad to say there are not many cases to go before you. The number of bills is six, which only represents five cases. I have to congratulate you on the tranquillity of your county."

In Kilkenny City, where the League are also strong, Judge Harrison was presented by the Grand Jury with a pair of white gloves, and in addressing them he said—

> "I have very great pleasure in receiving this emblem of the innocence of your city, as I may call it. I think it not merely an emblem of its present state, but it clearly represents the general condition of this fair city of Kilkenny."

This is the country which we are told is overrun with assassins and midnight marauders. Mr. Justice Holmes is partly responsible for the passing of the Coercion Act, and the first place he went to after his elevation to the Bench was Drogheda, where the Grand Jury presented him with a pair of white gloves. Mr. Justice Holmes said—

> "It is indeed a matter to me of great satisfaction on this the first occasion I have been called upon to preside in the Court of Assizes to find the calendar a blank, and to be able to congratulate you heartily on the freedom from crime which exists in the county of the town of Drogheda."

And yet this is one of the towns which have been already proclaimed under one of the provisions of the Crimes Act, and every inhabitant who remains a member of the National League after a further Proclamation has been issued by the Government will be liable to six months' imprisonment, and I am afraid Mr. Justice Holmes will get no more white gloves. I am going to join my words to those of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian in counselling the Irish people to refrain from outrage and crime; but, at the same time, I cannot help asking the House whether it is not testing the endurance and patience of the Irish people beyond human power when, in the face of facts like these, the country is represented by paid calumniators to be a pandemonium of intimidation? I will take some of the cases brought forward by the Government. I do not excuse some of the resolutions which the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland has read; I think they were unjustifiable and unjust. I do not propose to justify every single word and act and resolution passed by an organization of this immense size in these terrible times; but what are the Irish people fighting for just now? Hundreds and thousands of them are fighting for their homes, their wives, and their children. This organization is the great weapon which stands between them and destruction and starvation. They are fighting besides what I believe to be the last great fight for their liberties, and I challenge any man to say that in the history of the world there has ever been a people engaged in a struggle so vital who have been so absolutely free from crime. The right hon. Gentleman quoted many cases from the counties of Waterford, Wexford, and Louth. I think he quoted the resolutions of three branches in the County of Wexford. Now, what I want to say is this—that I condemn those Resolutions, and that I consider them unjustifiable and illegitimate; but I ask if the right hon. Gentleman can show that those Resolotions have led to injury of person or property? I say that the National League has a right to expel a member of a branch who violates the rules of the branch, provided that those rules are necessary and legitimate. Now, anyone who has studied the history of Ireland, and who has read John Stuart Mill's work on the cottier tenancy in Ireland, will know that the great evil of Irish tenant life has been that the price of a farm, worth perhaps £40, has been sometimes run up to £240, because the people look to the tenure of land as the one rock in the sea of starvation surrounding them. Any organization, therefore, which will interfere with this recklessness on the part of the tenant will not only protect the tenant, but also work a great economical change in Ireland. The Government were bound to show that the resolutions of the League branches have been followed by outrage on person or property, and I have quoted Wexford, because the worst cases of the Government were taken from that county. What is the state of crime there? There is a population of nearly 124,000, and out of that number there were just two offenders for trial at the last Summer Assizes. I should like to be shown any county in England which has a population of 124,000, and which has only two offenders for trial at the Assizes; and yet this is the very worst case the Government can bring forward. There is, however, no use in blinking the fact. The limit of the National League is conterminous with three of the Provinces of Ireland. Every grown Irishman in those Provinces, with the exception of a miserable minority of Tories, is a member of the National League or an active sympathizer with it. When you proclaim the League, you may talk as you like about the eclipse of the liberties of Ireland, but I say you are pronouncing war against the Irish people. The Government have thrown down the glove; we will take it up. I tell the Government that we are not afraid. You have begun a war already by bringing before a Police Court my hon. Friend the Member for North-East Cork (Mr. W. O'Brien). Do you think he is going to be frightened with that? I tell you that all your law, and all your prisons, and all your scaffolds, will avail nothing to make a man like him to swerve one jot from the course which patriotism dictates. I tell the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland that we have beaten a stronger man than he is, and that we have beaten better men than he is in the hours of the darkest night of our history. I wish to speak in terms of respect for the late Member for Bradford (Mr. W. E. Forster). He had the courage of his opinions; but we defeated him with the Land League. The Land League organization, as compared with the National League, is as a child compared with a giant. We have more branches, more people, and all the priests of Ireland at our back; we have the Bishops of Ireland at our back. That was not the case in the Land League days, when some of the most violent attacks upon the Land League were made from the Archiepiscopal Palace in Dublin. A very different spirit reigns there now. If the right hon. Gentleman can carry this first line of defence, we have another line of defence which the Government have never had the courage to attack. It is the chapel yard and the sanctuary. But we are stronger than we were in England also; the tide is rising in our favour all over the country. We know that the country would have returned a Liberal Government if they had been relieved of the incubus of the Primrose League. I advise hon. Gentlemen, if they want a case of Boycotting in England, to read *The Daily News* of this morning, and they will see how a lady was able to frighten all her servants. I say that there is more Boycotting and more intimidation in one county in England than there is in the whole of Ireland; and I say, further, that it is no longer a question whether we have a majority of the people with us, because that is an established fact. The question we have to discuss with ourselves is whether the majority of the constituents will be able to defy the threats and the action of the Primrose League against their property, their employment, and their peace of mind, and give the vote which their consciences dictate. I believe that the people of England are on our side, and that they are more and more so every day; and I say that the reason why we have won the recent elections is because the Government carried their Coercion Act. Does the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland think that we, who contended with Cromwell, with James, with Charles, and with William, are afraid of a niminy-piminy Bismarck of the nineteenth century? If against my countrymen you carry your Coercion Act into operation, I beg and implore of them from my place in Parliament to remember the saying of the greatest of their liberators, that "He who commits a crime gives strength to the enemy"; and I ask them in this struggle to quit themselves like men, and to be buoyed up with the knowledge that coercion is the shortest road to the liberties of a people.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Sir George Trevelyan.*)

Motion *agreed to.*

Debate *adjourned* till *To-morrow.*

ORDER OF THE DAY.

—o—

LABOURERS' ALLOTMENTS BILL.—[BILL 329.]

(*Mr. Ritchie, Mr. Secretary Stanhope, Mr. W. H. Long.*)

COMMITTEE. [*Progress 19th August.*]

[SECOND NIGHT.]

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 3 (Acquisition of land for purposes of this Act).

MR. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby): The Amendment I have to move is for the purpose of getting rid of the necessity of proceeding by Provisional Order, and having to get that Provisional Order confirmed by Parliament. I wish to take this opportunity of referring to the great inconvenience of having an Amendment of an exceedingly important character put on the Paper this morning only. We have a lengthy Amendment put down by the Government in place of a new clause which was placed in our hands when we were in Committee, and which very largely differs from that clause. Can the right hon. Gentleman tell me why it is that this and other clauses have been proposed; and, if so, whether he is prepared to give us a reasonable time for their consideration? When Progress was reported last we had been discussing at some length the cumbersome machinery proposed by the Bill as it originally stood, and we were all glad when the right hon. Gentleman told us that by an Amendment which he would put down, at all events, a great part of that cumbersome machinery had been done away with. I understand that we have done entirely with the Quarter Sessions for the purpose of this Bill. [Mr. RITCHIE: Yes.] We have also done away with arbitration to decide the value under the Lands Clauses Consolidation Act, and the land is now to be valued by a valuer to be nominated by the Local Government Board, if the parties cannot agree. I receive that intimation from the right hon. Gentleman with great pleasure; but there is one difficulty which we have not got rid of—that is, in having to proceed by Provisional Order, which Order is to be confirmed by Parliament. I propose to substitute for procedure by Provisional Order an application to the Local Government Board for its sanction to acquire land by compulsion, such sanction to be in the form of a certificate sealed by the Board to have the force and effect of a Provisional Order, and not to require confirmation by Parliament, but to be preceded by a local inquiry, in which the Local Authority shall produce the necessary evidence. It is said that this procedure is an unusual one. So far as I am concerned—and I believe I am right in speaking for the artizans and labourers—what we want is something different, whether it proceeds on old or new lines. It is absolutely essential that if any system of allotments is to act, the expense must be kept down to a minimum. I said the other night that the labourers wished to have the land under no circumstances by way of charity—that they wished to pay for it, and that if they are to pay for it in the form of rent that rent ought to be as small as possible. Now, the preliminary proceeding proposed by this Amendment is that there should be a Local Government Board inquiry. A good deal was said the other day with regard to the expense which such inquiry would involve; but I am bound to differ from the views then expressed, because, so far as my experience goes, the expense of the Local Government Board inquiry is exceedingly trivial. I am told that the Inspectors of the Local Government Board have no fees of any sort, and that the only money paid to them is for their travelling and the hotel expenses. I have made inquiries, and have been told that there was hardly any case in which the whole expense of the Local Government Board inquiry had amounted to £5. An inquiry, then, by the Local Government Board will be eminently satisfactory to all of us; on the other hand, the expense of obtaining a Provisional Order is very great indeed. I cannot speak with much experience on that subject, but I have made inquiries with regard to it, and I find that it is very difficult to get a Provisional Order, even if unopposed, at a less cost than £90. But, rather than that I should exaggerate, let me say £50. [Mr. Ritchie: No, no!] The expense of the Provisional Order would cause a very material addition to the rent of the land if you are to add it to the price. Again, the application to Parliament might be a very expensive thing indeed because, as the hon. and learned Attorney General said, we must consider with whom the Sanitary Authority will have to deal; and they will be dealing with those who have been described as unwilling landowners. We must remember that they will be very unwilling landowners, because if we are going to pass this Bill with compulsory powers we cannot blind ourselves to the consequences by saying that we are passing a Bill to meet cases which will never arise. As I have said, the landlord will be very unwilling indeed; he will, in fact, be a man to do everything in his power to prevent the labourers having allotments on his land. It must be assumed that the land will belong to these unwilling landlords, who will have refused to sell voluntarily; and, therefore, when the Bill is brought in for confirming the Provisional Order it will be opposed, and, if I have read the provisions of the Public Health Act of 1875 correctly as applied to this Bill, the Local Sanitary Authority will be considered the promoters of the Bill, and will have to bear the expense. At all events, the right hon. Gentleman will agree that all this is most likely to arise in any case where compulsory powers have to be sought. Therefore, I think I have sufficiently explained—for I have no wish to detain the Committee—the meaning of my Amendment. I would say that at the end of the Amendment I proposed to incorporate, instead of the section of the Public Health Act proposed in the Bill, only Sub-sections 1 and 2 of Section 176, and a Proviso at the end of Sub-section 5, which sub-sections deal with the incorporation of such parts of the Lands Clauses Consolidation Act as will still be necessary, including those parts relating to advertisements. In this way I cut out Sub-sections 3, 4, and 5, which deal with Provisional Orders. I do not desire to detain the Committee any longer. A great deal of my Amendment is similar to that of the hon. Member for the Wellingborough Division (Mr. Channing), and I hope the right hon. Gentleman opposite may see his way to accepting the proposal which seems to me a simple mode of proceeding.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member's Amendment is defective in the last paragraph.

Mr. COBB: I propose in the Amendment, in the last line but one, after the word "of," to insert "Section 176 of."

Amendment proposed,

In page 2, line 9, to leave out from the word "authority," to the end of sub-section (4), and insert the words "shall apply for the sanction of the Local Government Board to acquire by compulsion land, whether within or without such district or parish, sufficient for such allotments. Such sanction shall be in the form of a certificate sealed by the Board, and shall, so far as is consistent with the tenour of this Act, have all the force and effect of a provisional order under 'The Public Health Act, 1875,' but shall not require any confirmation by Parliament. Such certificate shall, within seven days after it is sealed, be served upon the sanitary authority and the vendor, and shall be binding upon and enforceable by and against them respectively.

"The Local Government Board shall, before sanctioning, either wholly or partially, any purchase, institute a local inquiry, and require evidence to be produced by the sanitary authority as to their ability to let in allotments the lands which it is proposed to purchase compulsorily, at rents sufficient to meet the requirements of section two of this Act.

"Sub-sections (1) and (2), and the proviso at the end of sub-section (5), of section one hundred and seventy-six of 'The Public Health Act, 1875,' shall be incorporated with this Act."—(*Mr. Cobb.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'may' stand part of the Clause."

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): The hon. Gentleman, in the remarks he has made to the Committee, has not alluded to many of the points raised in his Amendment. There are many points raised in his proposal other than those to which he has made particular reference; but as the hon. Member himself has not alluded to those particular points, and has confined his observations to a particular matter, I will also confine my observations, if he will allow me, to those matters to which he has limited himself. The point to which he confined himself, I would remind him, has been alluded to before and decided. The question he has raised in this Amendment, as I understand it, is whether or not the machinery set up, in the event of some sanction being required for purposes other than agreement, should provide for this sanction by way of Provisional Order, or by means of inquiry by the Local Government Board without Parliamentary sanction at all. Now, we have discussed that matter in a previous Amendment, and on the last occasion we deprecated any treatment of the landlord in this case different from the treatment in any other case in England—at least, where land is acquired for what is commonly understood as allotment. Now, the hon. Gentleman said, speaking of the expense, and, I think, very justly, that the expense of an inquiry by the Local Government Board is very small; but, at the same time, he said that the expense of a Provisional Order is very considerable, sometimes as much as £50 and more. Now, the hon. Gentleman is quite right in saying that inquiry by the Local Government Board would cost very little—hardly anything at all — but, really and truly, the machinery which would have to be adopted, if the hon. Gentleman's proposal were accepted, would involve a charge hardly less expensive than the machinery of the Bill, provided there were opposition to the confirming Bill. What is the machinery? The machinery is an inquiry by the Local Government Board, and at that inquiry everybody who is concerned is heard, and the expenses of the confirmation of the Order which is granted after that inquiry by the Local Government Board, if there is no opposition, is really, practically speaking, *nil*, the whole expense being the expense previous to the confirming Bill, which the hon. Gentleman admits is small. Well, then, the whole question is, whether the landowner in this particular case is to be treated differently to a landowner in any other case where land is to be acquired compulsorily, and the view of the Government is that the landowner ought not to be treated in any different manner?

MR. COBB: Why not?

MR. RITCHIE: Why should the landlord be treated differently?

MR. COBB: To make a cheaper allotment.

MR. RITCHIE: Yes; but in making a cheaper allotment you may be doing an injustice to the landlord. The landowner has a perfect right, so far as I know anything of the practice which exists at present, to have an ultimate appeal to Parliament, and I have seen nothing whatever in the object which is sought to be obtained by this Bill, which ought to put a landlord in a different position to that in which he is now with reference to any other proposal for the acquiring of his land. I would point out that, so far as expense is concerned—so far as the position of the landowner is concerned—there is no reason to expect that after a full inquiry, which is invariably afforded by the Local Government Board, where the landlord is heard, and every reason that he has to give in opposition to the action of the Sanitary Authority is heard, there is no reason to believe that he will on many occasions oppose the confirmation Bill. The hon. Gentleman has alluded to the expense of opposing a confirmation Bill; but I would point out that the expense of that course would be very great, and that the landlord, after having been fully heard before an Inspector of the Local Government Board, would not in one case out of a hundred care to undertake any ultimate appeal to Parliament. It would, even if his taxed costs were paid, be a very considerable expense to the landowner; and that being so, I do not see any reason why the landowner should not have an ultimate appeal to Parliament in this case as well as in every other case in which his land is acquired. It is viewed by a large number of people as a strong order indeed that the landowner should be compelled to sell his land compulsorily, even under a Provisional Order. The Government would take care where the compulsory acquisition of land is necesary to consult the prevailing feeling of landlords; but they think where it would be necessary to compel the landowner it should be done by a simple and easy process. Where the landowners meet the general demands for allotments, we have enabled it to be done in the manner laid down in the Bill; but we cannot go further and treat the landowner under this measure in a different way to that in which landowners are treated under the present law. The whole procedure is simple and inexpensive; and in my opinion and in that of the Government it will not be resorted to once in a hundred times; but we cannot do the landowner the injustice of depriving him of his land without allowing him an ultimate appeal to Parliament, however important it may be to acquire his land, even though it may be necessary for the life of the neighbourhood. I hope the hon. Member will not press his Amendment to a Division, as the Government cannot in any case assent to it.

Mr. COBB: Has the right hon. Gentleman any objection to the word "shall" instead of "may" in the clause?

Mr. RITCHIE: I have a very strong objection to the insertion of the word "shall" instead of "may." I find that one of the points to which I have referred, the hon. Gentleman did not allude to in his speech. The objection to the word "shall" is this. In the 2nd clause we lay upon the Sanitary Authority an obligation under certain circumstances of acquiring the land. Well, then we go on in this particular clause, having dealt with the question of the voluntary acquisition of land, to say if the Sanitary Authority are unable to hire or purchase by agreement the necessary land, they may petition the County Authority, who, if they are satisfied that it would be to the public advantage to provide allotments, may make a provisional order authorizing the Sanitary Authority to put in force the provisions of the Lands Clauses Consolidation Act. The 2nd clause will be read with this 3rd clause, and it will be the duty of the Sanitary Authority to apply for the compulsory acquisition of land if the conditions laid down in the clause are in their opinion complied with. If the word "shall" were inserted instead of "may," it would mean that, whether or not the conditions as to recouping to the Sanitary Authority the interest on the money they had spent were complied with, they should be bound to take the land compulsorily. If the word "shall" were put in, it would be the imperative duty of the Sanitary Authority to apply to the Local Government Board for compulsory powers whether they considered that the provisions of the Act were complied with or not. My contention is that it should be the duty of the Sanitary Authority, if they cannot purchase the land voluntarily, to do it compulsorily if the conditions laid down are complied with. We cannot consent to part with these conditions.

Mr. A. J. WILLIAMS (Glamorgan, S.): Before this matter is finally disposed of, I would put my simple protest on record against the method of dealing with these compulsory powers proposed in the Bill. The Amendment proposed by my hon. Friend seems to me to be essential if we are to deal with landlords who are not willing to meet the Local Authorities. It is perfectly idle to say that you will in every single instance be able to obtain the land you require at such a price as would justify the Local Authority in going in to obtain land from a landowner who is not willing to sell, if you are to use the machinery originally put into this Bill. We are told by the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board that we are diverting from the original authority established for the compulsory purchase of land—that in every instance where the purchase of land by compulsion has had recourse to, the landlord has hitherto had, either directly or indirectly, an opportunity of applying to this House. We are told that it is unheard of to deviate from this rule; but we are going to deviate from rules very soon which will cost this country millions of money. If not in this Session and by the present Ministry, at all events in another Session and by another Ministry, we shall one day lay down a much more generous rule, ignoring the desires of the landlords, whilst complying with the claims of those who want to occupy the land of the country. It is idle to tell me that we are going to get a Provisional Order for £25. In every instance where we are going to use this machinery, and where we have to deal with an obstinate landlord, we shall find that he will do everything which a lavish expenditure of money can do to prevent allotments being taken from his property. It is true that the ordinary Provisional Order can be obtained for £25; but I venture to say that, supposing this Amendment is rejected and no similar proposal inserted to compel a reluctant landlowner to give up 10 or 15 or 20 acres of land in the neighbourhood of a town or village, it will cost a great deal more than £100 sooner or later. At all events, every penny, every shilling or pound additional expense, if we are to make this experiment successful, which is needlessly incurred will tend to retard the operation of the Act; and I say to the Government, if they do not adopt some machinery as simple and effective as that now suggested, this Bill will be a dead letter. In answer to the charge made against hon. Members that they are endeavouring to obstruct the Bill, I would ask hon. Members to make their protest as short and as brief as they can. Let the Bill go with a mere protest and let the country see that it is a mere sham and a delusion.

VISCOUNT EBRINGTON (Devon, Tavistock): I do not sympathize with the desire of hon. Gentlemen to transfer the authority in the matter from Parliament to a Public Office. If it were a question between Parliament and the reformed County Authority, which I hope we are to have some day or other, I should be in favour of giving it to the County Authority; for I do think there is very little probability of these reforms being obtained if all of them are to be got through this House. But to make a new departure now, to adopt a new authority in the shape of a Government Office, is, in my opinion, simply absurd.

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I pointed out on Friday night that in Ireland, under a precisely similar Code of Acts—the Irish Labourers' Allotments Acts—a Provisional Order does not come before Parliament. If a Provisional Order is objected to, the objection is finally decided upon by the Privy Council. Let me point out that this Amendment really gives the landlord a better chance than the Irish Act does. If the Local Government Board made an absolute Order under the proposed Amendment, their action could be criticized in the House just as freely as if a confirming Order were before the House; every possible means could be taken by the friends of the landlords to make their grievances known, and, in face of that fact, I confess I am surprised to hear it repeated that there is anything new in the principle. There is nothing at all new in the principle.

MR. RITCHIE: I have not forgotten the remarks the hon. Gentleman made the other night. Of course, we know very well that there are circumstances in Ireland which are in many respects peculiar to the country, and which we do not find in England. I may point out to the hon. Gentleman that if a confirming Bill is not opposed, as it is not opposed in 99 cases out of 100, the effect is precisely the same as the hon. Gentleman says it is in Ireland. If there is no opposition, the Bill goes before the Unopposed Bills Committee, and the expense is almost *nil*. The Attorney General (Sir Richard Webster) referred the other night to the action of the Privy Council, and said, very truly, that if there was a choice between Parliament and the machinery proposed in this Bill and the Privy Council, 99 men out of 100 would prefer the machinery proposed in this Bill.

SIR WALTER FOSTER (Derby, Ilkeston): Let me say one or two words in reference to this Amendment. The last time the Bill was in Committee I said it seemed to me that these clauses were unworkable, and would be likely to add so much to the cost of the land as practically to render the Act nugatory. In this clause we have to make provision for dealing with obstinate landlords: with landlords who refuse to give voluntarily, allotments to labourers, and who refuse also to help the Sanitary Authority to carry out the work entrusted to them. We really have to deal with the obstinacy of landlords who are willing to spend their money in order to maintain an obstinate objection to the operation of this Bill. The whole history of the enormous amount of money spent on land for public purposes, is a history of obstinacy on the part of landowners, who would not part with their land for public purposes. Now, in the present Bill, we have a public and national purpose much more important than that for which land has hitherto been taken by compulsion. We have to take land for the purpose of saving the peasantry of this country; the peasantry are decreasing by thousands every year because they have practically been kept in a state of servitude. The peasant is the only worker in this country who is unable to get the means to work for himself at his own trade. We want to alter the present system, and these Compulsory Clauses are not strong and not effective enough for our purpose. I believe they will result in adding so much to the cost of the land when purchased under them, that the land will become too dear to be cultivated at a profit, and therefore the whole thing will fall to the ground. I am astonished at hon. Gentlemen opposite, who have been advocating the voluntary principle, being so inconsistent. If the voluntary principle is so powerful, if, indeed, they have no fear of these Compulsory Clauses, but think that these clauses will simply act as a stimulus to voluntary effort, I cannot understand why they should oppose the strengthening of these clauses.

Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): If I thought Local Authorities would be put to very large expense in the obtaining of Provisional Orders, I should think twice before I supported the provisions of the Bill in this respect. But experience shows that, in a great number of cases, opposition to Provisional Orders is so rare and so small that, practically, it may be disregarded altogether. I think the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board is quite right in saying that there is no opposition to Provisional Orders in 99 cases out of 100. But I am not prepared to say that, in the present instance, there should be no appeal against Provisional Orders. It is sufficiently possible to conceive injustice being done even by the Local Government Board to make it desirable to reserve the right of appeal. The hon. Gentleman the Member for South Kilkenny (Mr. Chance) has adverted to the case of Ireland; I take it that the Privy Council there is put in the place of Parliament, and for the very purpose of preventing the expense which would be entailed by parties coming to Westminster—not to prevent an appeal from the decision, but in order to give another kind of appeal. If it were at all desirable to substitute the Privy Council for Parliament, that might be an argument; but no one will pretend to propose that. I think that, on the whole, Parliament would be a better tribunal in England than the Privy Council. The cases would be very rare in which there would be an appeal; and I think, therefore, that, taking all the circumstances into consideration, we may allow this clause to stand as it now is. It may be worth while considering hereafter whether there should not be some simple process of appeal. I should also like to point out that in most cases of appeal—cases of Provisional Orders—Committees have power to give costs if they think the opposition is frivolous; and I cannot help thinking that if landlords were obstructive, and in one or two cases a Committee of this House gave costs against them, we should hear very little in future of such opposition. I therefore think the Committee will do wisely in adopting the proposal of the Government as it stands.

Mr. CHANCE: I have heard many prophecies, but I have something better than prophecy to offer in the case of Ireland, where the Privy Council is the absolute authority. Landlords in Ireland, almost to a man, have taken their appeal to the Privy Council. They have fought their appeals tooth and nail, and they have not been deterred by any fear of costs or anything else. The Irish landlords are comparatively poor, and one would say they could not so well afford to fight in cases such as these as English landlords could. English landlords will give allotments to labourers whose politics agree with theirs, and refuse allotments to those whose politics are not similar to theirs.

Question put,

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 142; Noes 66: Majority 76.—(Div. List, No. 420.) [1.30 A.M.]

Amendment proposed,

In page 2, line 9, to leave out the words "the county authority of the county in which this district or parish is situate, and the county authority (after such inquiry and procedure as provided in the sections hereinafter incorporated in this Act) may, if satisfied that it will be to the public advantage to provide such allotments," in order to insert "the Local Government Board to."—(*Mr. Seale-Hayne.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

Mr. RITCHIE: We propose, by an Amendment, to set up the Local Government Board to exercise and perform the duties of the County Authority under this Act until the new County Authorities are established. When this is done, we propose that the functions of the Local Government Board shall be confined to introducing a Bill confirming the Provisional Orders. I do not gather whether the hon. Gentleman is opposed to the new County Authority acting when they are set up, or whether he is simply opposed to the County Authority in the meantime. If he is opposed to the County Authority altogether, then we must object to the proposal of the hon. Member.

Mr. SEALE-HAYNE (Devon, Ashburton): If we are to have first to go before the Sanitary Authority, then to the County Authority, and then before the Local Government Board, there will be great delay and expense. The objection is to the County Authority interposing between the Sanitary Authority and the Local Government Board.

Mr. RITCHIE: The proposal of the Government is that until the new authority is set up the Local Government Board shall be the authority to issue the Provisional Order, and that when the new County Authority is the representative of the different areas throughout the country, then the Provisional Order shall be issued by the County Authority, and not the Local Government Board; that is to say, that the Sanitary Authority, instead of applying to the Local Government Board to issue the Provisional Order, will apply to the new representative County Authority, who will, by means of a committee or otherwise, make inquiry and issue the Provisional Order. In making that arrangement, the Government believed they were going in the direction of decentralization and granting that extension of local self-government which everyone desires. The Local Government Board will act purely ministerially in presenting the Bill to Parliament.

Mr. SEALE-HAYNE: That is exactly what I said. The new County Authority will interpose—["No, no!"] I say it will make a new process necessary in order to obtain the Provisional Order. It is clear that you have first to apply to the Sanitary Authority, then to the County Authority, and then, as has just been admitted by the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board, the County Authority is to go to the Local Government Board, and they will present the Bill to Parliament; and the whole of that process has to be gone through to get two acres of land. Under those circumstances, the Bill is simply waste paper, so far as concerns getting land by compulsion. I shall be obliged to press my Amendment.

Mr. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley): I hope the hon. Gentleman will not put the Committee to the trouble of dividing on this Amendment, because I think the Government proposals are far more liberal than that of the hon. Member. Instead of the Petition going before the Department in London it goes into the hands of the representative authority in the county in which we live; in other words, it goes into our own hands. The Local Government Board, in case of need, must present the Bill, and that they will do without expense, whereas, if the County Authority had to do this they would have to bear all the expense. The effect of the Government proposal is, therefore, quite contrary to what the hon. Gentleman presumes. I hope that this matter will not take up any more time. For my own part, I am very pleased to find such a decentralizing proposal emanating from the Government. I should not have thought of proposing anything of the kind, because I should not have expected the Government to accept it.

Mr. CHANCE: I think that probably a misunderstanding has arisen here, owing to the Government having put in lines 19 and 20 that "any County Authority" may apply to the Local Government Board to introduce a Bill confirming the Provisional Orders. To say that "any County Authority" may do this is, of course, nonsense. I trust there will be no Division on this Amendment, because, as far as I can see, there is very little in it.

MR. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): I do not understand why the Government have not put an Amendment on the Paper to restrict this clause and make it conform with the distinct promises given to the House. The appeal to the county magistrates, as the Committee is aware, has been got rid of. The clause as it stands is perfect nonsense.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Amendment proposed, in page 2, line 13, leave out from "if satisfied" to "such allotments," in line 14.—*Viscount Wolmer.*)

Question, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause," put, and *agreed to.*

MR. JESSE COLLINGS: The first part of the Amendment standing in my name has already been discussed, with the result that the Government are going to leave it to the Local Government Board to decide in case of any dispute between the seller and purchaser of the land. With regard to the last part of the Amendment, which settles the price as between a willing vendor and a willing purchaser, that can be better dealt with when the Amendment on page 35 is reached, and it will therefore save time if I do not move it.

MR. SEALE-HAYNE: The object of the Amendment which I rise to move is to give power to the Local Government Board to authorize the Sanitary Authority to take land on lease for the purpose of letting it for allotments. I think in some cases the Sanitary Authority will be loth to raise on loan the money necessary to buy land for putting in operation the provisions of the Bill; on the other hand, I am of opinion that if they can take land on lease they will not have the same objection, and that the result will be that the Act will come into operation in a greater number of cases than it otherwise would.

Amendment proposed,

In page 2, line 18, after the word "agreement," to insert the words—"(3.) The Local Government Board may, by a Provisional Order under this Act, authorise a sanitary authority to take compulsorily any lands referred to in such order for any term of years not exceeding ninety-nine years, at a rent, and subject to terms, provisions, and conditions, to be determined in case of difference in the manner by this Act prescribed for the determining a question of disputed compensation; and the provisions of 'The Lands Clauses Consolidation Act, 1845,' and the Acts amending the same, and of this Act, shall apply as if such compulsory taking for a term of years were a purchase of land otherwise than by agreement. A lease of lands compulsorily taken for a term of years under this Act may be in the prescribed form or to the like effect, and shall be effectual to vest the lands so taken in the lessees for the term and subject to the rent, conditions, and provisoes therein expressed." — (*Mr. Seale-Hayne.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. CHAPLIN: This question was raised the other night by the hon. Member for South Kilkenny (Mr. Chance). He pointed out that its principle had already been adopted in the Bill which applies to Ireland; but even if that is the case I hope the Government will not accept this Amendment. It must be generally admitted that this Bill means that the land is to be taken by compulsion. Of course, in the minds of hon. Gentlemen opposite land which may have been purchased and paid for by the landlord is not his property, and may be taken by them whenever they want it; some of them, at any rate, think that a far more generous rule should be adopted than that of paying for the land. It was pointed out the other night that this might be a very convenient Amendment to adopt, because it was said that the experiment might be tried for a time, and that when the lease fell in it would be taken back by the landlord. I should like to know in what state the land would be when an experiment of this kind had been tried upon it? I am bound to say that when you adopt the principle that the land should be taken by compulsion, the very least you can do is to buy the land outright, and give the landlord what compensation he is entitled to; and unless the terms are left entirely to the landlord, I hope the Government will refuse the Amendment.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: I hope the Government will not accept the advice of the right hon. Gentleman opposite. I look upon the Amendment as a very important one, and I believe that if it is agreed to the Bill will be a much greater success than it otherwise would be. There are two precedents for this proposal; one is to be found in the Crofters Act, and the other in the Labourers

(Ireland) Act. In both Ireland and Scotland it has been found to be a very useful provision, and it has greatly facilitated the working of those measures. I am sure, if the House will adopt it, that it will greatly simplify the operation of the Bill and relieve the Sanitary Authority of the necessity of finding money for the purchase. It is very easy to understand that there might be such a condition of things that the Sanitary Authority would prefer to take the land for a term of years. On the whole, I think the landlord would be placed in a better position by the introduction of this Amendment; and I again express the hope that the Government will not follow the advice of the right hon. Gentleman opposite.

Mr. RITCHIE: The right hon. Gentleman advanced an argument in this case to the effect that in many cases the landlord would prefer to sell the land if the option were given to him. Well, there is nothing to prevent the landlord doing that if he does prefer it. Under the Bill, land may be acquired by three processes. The Sanitary Authority may lease or hire it, and the right hon. Gentleman may see that the landlord in that way has the opportunity he desires to have to sell his land rather than to let it. Then the landlord has an opportunity of letting his land, and in cases where that cannot be done and it may be desirable to buy it, the landlord may be compelled to sell under certain restrictions. We are asked to still further extend the principle of compulsion and to compel landlords to part with their land for a term of years. As far as I am concerned, that is a proposal which we cannot entertain for a single moment. We consider that it would be open to all the objections which my right hon. Friend the Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire (Mr. Chaplin) has referred to. We consider that it would be wrong to compel the landlord to part with his land in order to enable the Local Sanitary Authority to make experiments to ascertain whether or not it could let the land advantageously to tenants. Apart from that objection, which, so far as the Government are concerned, they think vital, I would point out another objection—namely, that it would have an injurious effect upon the working of the Bill. One can easily conceive that many occasions would arise in which the landlord would be perfectly willing to sell his land voluntarily to the Local Sanitary Authority, but in which, if he were compelled —if there were any power in the Bill to compel him to part with his land for a limited term of years, he would resist it to the utmost.

Mr. CHANCE: Let me point out— ["Order, order!"]——

Mr. RITCHIE: The hon. Member will have an opportunity of speaking after I have done. The landlord might be willing to sell his land, but not willing to let it under the provisions of this clause. If he could not be compelled the operation of the Bill would be perfectly simple, as there would be no question of opposition or compulsory powers or Provisional Orders. There would be no expense whatever. The whole thing would be done voluntarily; but if the Sanitary Authority insisted on hiring the land rather than buying it the landlord would resist it and compel the Sanitary Authority to go for a Provisional Order, and ultimately to appeal to Parliament, and perhaps the Confirmation Bill would be opposed by the landowners, and large expense would be inflicted on the locality; whereas, if the question were one of purchase, the whole thing would be done voluntarily. The Labourers (Ireland) Act has been referred to. I am told that this particular section in that Act does not work by any means satisfactorily, and that the operation of it is exactly as I have pointed out—namely, that the landlords willing to sell are unwilling to let for a fixed period; so that the whole operation of the compulsory powers have to be resorted to. We cannot impose on the landowner the unjust provision of the proposal now made.

Mr. CHANNING: I do not wish to detain the Committee upon this Amendment; but I wish to point out to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire what may be in the recollection of many Members of this House, that the Bill introduced by the present Earl of Winchilsea, when he was in this House last year, which was, in my opinion, a satisfactory Bill—and I am not sure that the name of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire was not on the back of it—there was one clause that completely met the argument of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board. It was this, that when the compulsory power was to be put into operation the landowner was left the option of saying to the Local Authority—"You shall take the land on lease——"

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir Richard Webster) (Isle of Wight): That is in the Bill now.

Mr. CHANNING: I do not see that it is in this Bill. No doubt when you are dealing with the voluntary agreement stage you can say that it is in the Bill, but when you are dealing with the compulsory stage you can say nothing of the kind; the landlord is bound to sell. The speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire was singularly significant. He dwelt with complacency on the fact that there was not much compulsion likely to come about or intended to be brought about by this Bill—I am judging from the general tone of his remarks. That seems to be a comment upon what he said on the second reading, in his interchange of compliments with the hon. Member for Bordesley—namely, that this humble measure had no resemblance whatever to that dangerous "Unauthorized Programme," which was the expression of what he once described as the "predatory instincts" of the hon. Member and his Friends. I should like to know if the Amendment before the Committee provides for the absolute protection of the landlord in this matter? It seems to me that it offers a satisfactory means of meeting very serious difficulties. The point which makes me support this Amendment most heartily is just this. Everyone who is in any way familiar with the neighbourhood of large towns must know perfectly well that the great question of the future must be whether we shall give Local Authorities power to buy up and appropriate land around towns, and so appropriate all the prospective building value of these lands. I think myself it would be a great injustice at the present moment to insist upon the compulsory purchase of land in the neighbourhood of large towns at its agricultural value. At the same time, you will defeat the purpose of this Bill, and destroy the value of it to labourers and artizans who want land if you do not provide them with allotments at agricultural value. It, therefore, seems to me reasonable and proper before we settle this question of the unearned increment, which is a question which must be settled in the future, that we should in the mean time introduce some provision of this kind to enable the Sanitary Authority to take lands for a certain definite period. If this Amendment is unsatisfactory on account of the period it fixes, then insert in it some shorter period. That would enable labourers and artizans to obtain land now on such reasonable terms that they can make a fair profit out of it, and then in a few years time the landlord might come into his land, and be able to realize the building value of it, supposing the value of land in that neighbourhood were increasing. In that way, I think, you would be able to guard the interests of all parties, and provide allotments cheaply and quickly. The important thing under this Bill is to secure for labourers an amount of land at agricultural value on which they can exert their labour. If by your procedure you compel the Authority to import into the price of lands in the neighbourhood of towns the building value as well as the agricultural value you would be acting unjustly to the labourer, by making it impossible for him to get land on reasonable and profitable terms.

Mr. CHANCE: There seems to be some misapprehension in this matter, and I point it out for the purpose of easing the mind of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire. The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board said that the adoption of this Amendment would lead to expense and friction and trouble, because he said the landowner would be willing to sell but might not be willing to let, and if the Sanitary Authority insisted on leasing then the landowner would put his back to the wall and fight the thing out. If that were a sound argument it would be fatal to the Amendment, but under the clause we are discussing there is a condition laid down precedent to the use of any compulsory power whatever by any authority, and what is that condition? It is that the Sanitary Authority must be unable to hire or purchase the land by agreement. Therefore, under this clause all the landlords objecting to a compulsory lease has to do is to say to the Sanitary Authority—"I am willing to sell you my land at a fair price," and then if the Sanitary Authority insists on attempting to use the compulsory powers he may go before a higher authority, and make a representation to the effect that he was willing to sell at a fair price, and the Local Government Board would thereupon decide that the compulsory powers could not be put into operation. That surely ought to bias the opinion of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire. I pointed out that there was a precedent for this legislation. I asked the House to recollect the date of that Act—namely, the 14th of August, 1885. That Act was passed both by this House and the other House of Parliament by a Conservative Government. I need not add anything more. I want to know, Sir, why a Conservative Government who were willing to do this for the Irish labourers are not now willing to do it for the English labourers?

Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): If I thought that this Amendment would facilitate the operation of the Act I would support it, but I think it would have the contrary effect. I quite admit the precedent of the Crofters Act. In that Act it was provided that power should be given for an extension of the existing holdings, and as these holdings were all held under lease it was necessary that the extensions given in the Bill should also be under lease, but in that case no alternative by purchase was given. If it had been possible to give an alternative by purchase in this case, I think it would have been found a much better and cheaper method, because where you have a choice I think it must be clear to everyone that the cost to the Local Authority of the neighbourhood of land which is paid for by money borrowed from the Exchequer would be much less than any fair rent that might be fixed by an impartial authority. Therefore, what is practically proposed by the Amendment is to give to the Local Authority an alternative which would be worse than that of the Bill.

Mr. HANDEL CSOSHAM (Bristol, E.): I must say I heard with considerable surprise the remarks of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board. This Amendment appears to me to be so reasonable that I am astonished that Her Majesty's Government will not accept it. I am afraid that without this Amendment the Bill will be inoperative. I would remind hon. Members that it is not necessary that all the land about which they speak should be purchased from the landowners.

Mr. M'LAREN (Cheshire, Crewe): I think we must take precautions against the piling up of debt on the part of the Local Authorities. Their obligations are already very heavy, and it is necessary that we should do something to provide an alternative to their development. By the Amendment before the Committee we should obtain land for allotments without further debt on the part of the Local Authorities, and I think that is one very great reason for adopting the proposal. No doubt, as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) said, there are cases in which the leasing of the land may be more expensive than buying it out and out, and that should be a sufficiently good reason for the Local Authorities not favouring the course of leasing. I think it a pity that the Government should desire to put England behind Ireland and Scotland in this matter. It is the object of this Bill to create allotments with facility. I do not know if that is the object of all the hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite; but as was pointed out by an hon. Gentleman below the Gangway, although a Conservative Government passed the Agricultural Labourers Bill, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire, being a Member of that Government and agreeing to all that measure, he is not now willing to pass a similar provision for England. I cannot help thinking that one reason may be that hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite are not as sincerely anxious to give these facilities for providing allotments for workmen as they make believe to be.

Mr. JESSE COLLINGS: I have no objection to the Amendment, but I fail to see how it can facilitate the acquisition of allotments by labourers. As the Bill stands the Local Authority has power, by voluntary agreement, to hire land as well as to purchase it, and I have no doubt, and have always contended, that once a compulsory Bill is passed compulsion will be very rarely necessary. I have no doubt that in a very small number of cases land will be taken for short terms for purposes of allotments, and it seems to me certain that if the Local Authorities were to put the compulsory powers in force for taking land on lease in their localities they would be opposed, and there would have to be faced all the expenses of that opposition, whereas in the purchase of land such difficulty would not arise. I am a very strong advocate of the community possessing land wherever it can. On the Birmingham Town Council I have never failed to vote in favour of any proposal enabling the Committee to buy land under any circumstances. We ought to favour as much as possible the idea of land being municipalized, if I may so term it.

Mr. H. GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden): I wish to offer a few remarks to show why I shall especially support this clause, which I consider a most important one for the agricultural labourers whom I have the honour to represent. I think that, in the first place, it would be much easier to persuade Local Authorities to lease land than to buy land. The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) has told us that this principle is a most unfair one. I cannot see why it should be more unfair in England than it is in Scotland or in Ireland, and we have already had precedents quoted to us from Scotland and Ireland, showing that the principle of leasing land by compulsion is at the present moment adopted in those countries. It seems to me that hon. Gentlemen opposite are trying to whittle down the compulsory principle of this Bill as far as possible. It is a most refreshing sight for us on this side of the House to see the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire (Mr. Chaplin) agreeing with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain), and the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham (Mr. Jesse Collings) in a determined attempt to thwart the predatory provisions of this Bill. As the Representative of a Division which contains as many if not more agricultural labourers than any other represented in this House I do most warmly support this Amendment, and I hope my hon. Friend (Mr. Seale-Hayne) will proceed to a Division.

Mr. A. J. WILLIAMS (Glamorgan, S.): It appears to me that this clause, with one modification, will be of considerable use. In spite of the remarks of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire, I may say I do hold a little land. The land is in the neighbourhood of towns. Surely it is desirable that a Local Authority should have power to say—"We will take your land subject to your right of re-entry for building purposes." There cannot be any objection to such a provision, and I think the Government would do well to accept this Amendment.

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I am not particularly wedded to the principle of leasing, the more so as we on this side of the House advocate the principle of Leasehold Enfranchisement. But I am bound to say that there are cases where it might be very desirable that land should be leased rather than purchased, and it appears to me that in the interests of the good working of this Bill this is one of those cases. I have no hesitation whatever in supporting this Amendment. My hon. Friend the Member for the Ashburton Division of Devonshire (Mr. Seale-Hayne) only desires to see this Bill made a really useful and workable Bill. I say that fully conscious that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) may very shortly take another opportunity of meeting a few friends on his lawn at Birmingham, and denouncing all of us as personally obstructing a Bill which he says we do not desire to see passed. We have a perfect right to speak upon this measure, because in spite of the taunts of right hon. Gentlemen on this side of the House, or on the other side, we do happen to represent agricultural labourers. I venture to remind the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham that I have probably more agricultural labourers in my constituency than he has in West Birmingham. When this clause is supported by such undoubted Representatives as the two hon. Gentlemen who have just spoken, and also the hon. Members for the Ashburton Division of Devonshire (Mr. Seale-Hayne) and the Wellingborough Division of Northamptonshire (Mr. Channing) and the Rugby Division of Warwickshire (Mr. Cobb), I think it would be impertinent for a Member for any city or borough in the country to set up his experience in opposition to theirs. What are the arguments which we have heard against this proposal from the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Ritchie) who is in charge of this Bill? He tells us that it is very unfair to the landowners that they should have the land returned on their hands after the Local Authorities have made experiments under this Bill. I want to know why it is unfair? The land, if it is altered in character at all, will probably be altered for the better; it is not likely to be altered for the worse, because we have often heard from right hon. Gentleman opposite that a great deal of this land is not worth cultivating at all at the present time. The effect of a few years, or even of a few months' cultivation, would be that the spade culture of the agricultural labourer would have increased the fertility of the soil in the way that everybody knows allotment culture does as compared with cow culture. I have no hesitation in saying that if anyone were to benefit by a few years experiments of this kind, it would be the landlord if he should have the land returned to him. I am reminded by an hon. Gentleman near me that the landlord could recover damages for any loss under his covenant, a circumstance which certainly adds considerable force to our argument. Another argument which the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board used was that the Government would not compel landowners to part with their land for a limited period. Now, I want to know whether is it worse, once you have adopted the principle of compulsion, to compel a landowner to part with his land for a limited period than to part with it for ever? It appears to me that the greater includes the worse, and that if you compel a man to part with his land for ever it is certainly a far less grievance to compel him to part with it for only a limited period. Then he said that in this conclusion the Government have gone to the utmost limit of what they consider necessary. We have heard something to-night of wobbling. Until this Bill is through the House, and through the House of Lords, I shall not believe that right hon. Gentlemen opposite have come to the end of their tether.

Mr. C. W. GRAY (Essex, Maldon): The hon. Member for the Saffron Walden Division of Essex (Mr. H. Gardner) has given his opinion as to what the labourers have to say on this question. I have considerable knowledge of agricultural labourers, and I have always found when they argue these questions for themselves, and not through the medium of gentlemen who profess to know a great deal about agricultural labourers, but who perhaps do not know very much after all that agricultural labourers recognize the principle of fair play, and I am sure they would wish to be fair in this matter. The Government are trying to pass a generous Bill. [*Cries of* "No!"] Generous in the opinion of such hon. Members as the Members for Birmingham, who took an interest in this question before the hon. Member for the Saffron Walden Division of Essex (Mr. H. Gardner) knew anything about labourers. I should be putting myself in a most difficult position if I were, in this House, to say one word antagonistic to the real interests of labourers. I have been surprised that all these hypercritical Amendments should be proposed in the Committee, because I think that the Government have proposed a generous measure, and that the House ought to recognize that fact.

Mr. F. W. MACLEAN (Oxford, Woodstock): I am surprised that the hon. Member for the Camborne Division of Cornwall (Mr. Conybeare), who is in favour of Leasehold Enfranchisement, should support such an Amendment as this. The hon. Gentleman said that under the circumstances he supported this Amendment, but he did not say what were the circumstances. He is at times somewhat erratic in his courses, and I think he has been so on the present occasion. But I rise principally, Mr. Courtney, to reply to the observations of my hon. Friend the Member for the Saffron Walden Division of Essex. I entirely differ from him in the suggestion that he threw out that it was the intention of the Government, or the desire of the Government, to whittle down the principle of compulsion. I venture to submit to the Committee that if this clause were carried it would be extending, and extending not only in a very novel direction, but to a certain extent a dangerous direction, the principle of compulsion. What is the principle of compulsion? It is simply this, that the State interferes and says that a landowner must give up his land for public purposes when it is in the interest of the State that it should be given up for such purposes. It is only on this principle, and on this principle alone, that the question of compulsion rises at all. When my hon. Friends refer to the precedents in Ireland and in Scotland, I ask them to bear this in mind, that the Land Clauses Consolidation Act was passed so long ago as 42 years—it was passed in 1845—and never since that period has it been suggested, until to-day, that Railway Companies or any other Companies requiring land compulsorily, under the provisions of that Act should be enabled to take the land for a limited period. Therefore, if we look upon the question as one of precedent, it is quite clear that, so far from precedent being in favour of my hon. Friend's contention, it is all the other way. Let me point out, however, that if this Amendment is carried, and this principle is sound, it will apply equally to the case of Railway Companies, who would compel landowners to give land for the purpose of Railways. They might take land for seven or 14 years, and after they had speculated with it, and found that the speculation was a bad one, they might say to the landowner—"You must take the land back." I consider that, not only on these grounds, but also on those urged by the right hon, Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain), this Amendment is not only unsound in principle, but it seems to be inexpedient in point of practice.

Mr. CHANCE: I do not see the precise parallel between Railway Companies and agricultural labourers. I cannot help thinking that this clause would facilitate the working of the Act, instead of hampering it, as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham thinks it would. As the proposal stands, the position of an unreasonable landlord will be this. He will say—"I will neither lease nor sell voluntarily, and thereby I shall be enabled to weary the Local Authority, and to put them to so great expense and trouble that they will be glad to hand me the full fee simple of the land." If this Amendment were accepted what would be the position of the landlord who declined to lease or sell at a fair price? The Local Authorities, as a set off, might say—"If you decline to do anything voluntarily we will apply for a compulsory lease, and will not buy the land at all." This would compel unreasonable landowners to consider what their position was before they came to loggerheads with the Local Authorities; whereas, if a landowner were reasonable he could prevent compulsory power being exercised at all by either leasing or selling willingly at a fair price. In the face of these facts, I do not see how this Amendment could encumber the operation of the Act.

Mr. CHAPLIN: I should like to point out the difference between Ireland and England in this respect. It is asked why we should not apply this principle to England, seeing that a Conservative Government have already applied it to Ireland. In England a man may wish to sell his estate. In these times it may be of great importance to a man to realize either the whole or some part of his estate. If you pass this Amendment you absolutely take away from a landowner the right to realize his property. Do you think that is fair? If the land is taken for 99 years how is it possible for a man to sell it? [An hon. Member: He could sell it subject to the lease.] There is nothing in the clause which bears such a contention out. The case of Ireland is totally different, because there you have passed laws already by which land is compulsorily taken away from the landowner for at least 15 years, and, so far as I have ever been able to understand, in perpetuity. The distinction between the two countries is perfectly clear. To deprive a landowner in England, at the present moment, of the possibility of realizing his property would be as gross an injustice as it is possible to do.

Mr. HALLEY STEWART (Lincolnshire, Spalding): I am extremely anxious we should not go to a Division on the false issue raised by the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Chaplin). Does the right hon. Gentleman contend for a moment that the length of lease—whether it be 7, 21, or 99 years, forbids a man to sell his estate if he is anxious to do so? If a landlord wished to sell his estate he would sell it subject to the compulsory lease and to all the conditions of tenancy existing under any circumstances. I never heard an argument addressed to any assembly of men so contrary to the first principles which regulate the commerce of land.

Question put.

The Committee *divided:*—Ayes 50; Noes 135: Majority 85.—(Div. List, No. 421). [2.20 A.M.]

MR. CONYBEARE: It is now half-past 2 o'clock, and I move that the Chairman report Progress. I hope the Government will now allow us to go home.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. Conybeare*).

MR. CHANNING: I hope the hon. Gentleman will not persist in his Motion. I think the Committee are extremely anxious to go on with the Bill.

MR. CONYBEARE: I understood the right hon. Gentleman to state that we should spend two hours on the Bill.

MR. RITCHIE: I trust the hon. Member will allow us to proceed. There is an Amendment in my name, which, I trust we shall be able to reach, and I suggest that we should go on, at any rate until a point is reached at which considerable discussion is likely to arise.

MR. CONYBEARE: How long?

MR. RITCHIE: I should like to finish the 3rd clause.

MR. CHAPLIN: I shall press this Bill forward with all the force in my power. It may be that the hon. Member for Camborne (Mr. Conybeare) wants to go home. But if that is so, why in Heaven's name does he not go? I am sure that the absence of the hon. Member, so far from injuring the Bill, would facilitate its progress.

MR. CONYBEARE: I am, under the circumstances, prepared to withdraw my Motion. But I may state, for the information of the right hon. Gentleman, that, personally, I am not at all anxious to go home, nor do I intend to do it. I made the Motion in the interest of Gentlemen on his own side of the House. As I said, I am quite prepared to withdraw the Motion; but I shall renew it at 3 o'clock.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Amendment proposed, in page 2, line 32, at end, insert—Provided that—

"(a.) Any question of disputed compensation, where the amount claimed or offered exceeds fifty pounds, shall not be referred to arbitrators or a jury as provided by 'The Lands Clauses Consolidation Act, 1845,' and the Acts amending the same, but shall be referred to the arbitration of a single arbitrator appointed by the parties, or if the parties do not concur in the appointment of a single arbitrator, then, on the application of either of them, by the Local Government Board, and the remuneration to be paid to the arbitrator appointed by the Local Government Board shall be fixed by that Board;

"(b.) If an arbitrator appointed for the purposes of this Act dies or becomes incapable to act before he has made his award, or fails to make his award within two months after he is appointed, his appointment shall determine, and the determination of the compensation shall be referred to another arbitrator appointed in like manner as if no arbitrator had been previously appointed: Provided always, that the same arbitrator may be re-appointed;

"(c.) An arbitrator appointed under this section shall be deemed to be an arbitrator within the meaning of 'The Lands Clauses Consolidation Act, 1845,' and the Acts amending the same, and the provisions of those Acts with respect to an arbitration shall apply accordingly; and, further, the arbitrator shall have power to disallow as costs in the arbitration the costs of any witness whom he considers to have been called unnecessarily, and any other costs which he considers to have been incurred unnecessarily."—(*Mr. Ritchie.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment, to leave out from lines 2 and 3, the words, "where the amount claimed, or offered, exceed fifty pounds."—(*Mr. Seale-Hayne.*)

Question, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the proposed Amendment," put, and *negatived.*

Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment, in line 9, after "Board," insert, "which arbitrator shall be resident surveyor in the district."—(*Mr. Seale-Hayne.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. RITCHIE: I think this would be a very unnecessary and injudicious Amendment. It might be, that the most desirable man to appoint does not reside in the county, and yet is very familiar with the value of the land.

MR. SEALE-HAYNE: I know very well what happens when an arbitrator is sent down by the Local Government Board or by the Board of Trade. The operation is generally a very expensive one, and gentlemen are sent down who know nothing about the value of the land in the district which they are to value. We want some one practically acquainted with the neighbourhood. I can assure the Committee that there is a serious expense incurred when these gentlemen are sent down from London, and I sincerely hope that the matter will be left to the local surveyors.

MR. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN: Perhaps I may be allowed to say that, having had considerable experience in matters of this kind, the Board of Trade surveyors are frequently preferred. When I was at the Office of the Local Government Board, applications were made to me from time to time that a person unacquainted with the district should be sent down, because he would be likely to be more impartial.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny S.): I propose to add, after the word "accordingly," in line 23—

> "But no compensation shall be awarded under this Act in respect of compulsion or for injury done or alleged to be done to the land compulsorily purchased."

The latter part of the Amendment contains a technical definition from the Land Act of 1845, in which power is given to award damages in the case of what is called severance, which amount to 5 per cent. Now the practice has arisen of awarding 10 per cent to an unwilling landlord. My object is that this custom of giving 10 per cent to a foolish or unreasonable landlord, and 5 per cent by reason of the severance, should be done away with.

Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment,

> After "accordingly," in line 23, insert "but no compensation shall be awarded under this Act in respect of compulsion or for injury done or alleged to be done to the land compulsorily purchased."—(*Mr. Chance.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER) (Isle of Wight): When the subject arose the other night I said that, in my opinion, the ordinary rule with regard to compensation should prevail in these cases. The hon. Member says there is some scale or standard of 5 per cent for compensation for severance. But there is nothing of the kind. In all cases of compensation it has to be proved by evidence that the land is damaged or injured. It is perfectly well known that there would be in some cases positive injustice in not allowing compensation for severance. There would be a strong objection on the part of the Government to the instruction being given which is contained in the hon. Gentleman's Amendment. Now, with regard to compulsory sale, for the reasons I shall put before the Committee, we must adhere to to the rule we have laid down. The present rule that rests on our recognized custom is this, that the market value is to be obtained—that is to say, the market value at the time the land is sold——

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.) (interrupting): I withdraw my Amendment in order that we may discuss the question of compulsion alone.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): I would suggest that we should agree to the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board, and then report Progress, in order that the hon. Member for East Northamptonshire (Mr. Channing) may bring forward his Amendment as to compulsory purchase at the beginning of the next Sitting.

MR. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): As the next Amendment stands in my name, I would venture to add a word in the same sense as the observations which have fallen from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Central Bradford (Mr. Shaw Lefevre). I accept the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board down to the end of Subsection C. It simply carries out the object of the Amendment I had upon the Paper, which you, Sir, ruled out of

Order here, the object of which was to substitute the procedure of the Artizans Dwellings Acts—the more economical arrangements provided under those Acts—for the procedure under the Lands Clauses Consolidation Act.

Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): I rise to Order. What is the Question before the Committee?

The CHAIRMAN: The Question is, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN: Of the right hon. Gentleman's Amendment?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Mr. CHANNING: When interrupted by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, I was saying that I was quite certain that on this side of the House the principle now suggested by the right hon. Gentleman would be accepted as a great improvement on the original procedure suggested by the Government. We accept this procedure. Speaking for myself, I am quite willing to go on with my my own Amendment; but I think that it will lead to protracted discussion, and it really raises such an important issue that I would add my own appeal to that of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Central Bradford that this is a convenient point at which to adjourn the discussion.

Mr. RITCHIE: I hope we shall be allowed to go on with the Bill. No doubt, the 10 per cent addition to the cost of purchase, which we have to discuss, is of great importance; but I would point out that the arguments, one way and the other, are very simple, and may be put very shortly. I believe the Committee is desirous of proceeding as far as possible with the Bill to-night. The Session is rapidly coming to a close; and it is evident, if we do not push forward as fast as we can, and make great progress, it will not be possible for the measure to pass into law this Session. Instead of arguing whether or not we should proceed, the time would be much better employed in taking the discussion itself.

Mr. CHANCE: I observe that the Amendment gives arbitrary power to disallow the costs of any witness who may have been called unnecessarily; but I am in doubt whether that will be sufficient to cover persons unwilling to sell voluntarily, and to compel them to pay the whole costs of the arbitration. I would ask whether it is intended to compel the landlord, who is responsible for costs being increased under these circumstances, to pay the whole of those costs?

Sir RICHARD WEBSTER: This point will not be left to the arbitrator. All that the arbitrator will have to deal with will be with the land which will have to be bought and sold; I have nothing to do with the question of the conduct of the person by whom it is sold. It is nothing to me whether they act reasonably or unreasonably.

Mr. CHANCE: I would point out that there may be an unreasonable refusal on the part of the landowner to part with his land before the compulsory power comes into force at all. If there is such an unreasonable refusal, and compulsory power comes into force, I want to make sure that the Local Authority shall not be compelled to pay costs which his unreasonable conduct has involved.

Sir RICHARD WEBSTER: That matter must be dealt with by the Authority dealing with the Provisional Order.

Mr. RITCHIE: Might I suggest that the hon. Member for East Northampton (Mr. Channing) should now move his Amendment?

Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE: It would be competent for the hon. Member for East Northampton to move his Amendment as a subsequent Amendment after this Amendment is agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: Certainly. That course could be taken if the hon. Member consents.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): I now move that you, Sir, report Progress, and ask leave to sit again. In doing so, I wish to say that I think an Amendment of this importance ought not to be taken at this hour of the morning (10 minutes to 3 o'clock). I have supported the Government on a great number of their Amendments throughout the Bill, and I think I have some right to a voice in the matter of the adjournment of the discussion. I decline, for my part, to go into these Amendments which are to follow at this hour of the night.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. Shaw Lefevre.*)

MR. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): I do not know what the decision of the Government will be; but I suppose, under our present Rules, they really have no alternative but to consent to reporting Progress, if that course is insisted upon by any number of Members on this side of the House. If that is the course which is to be pursued, I hope that, at all events, it will be observed that the great majority of the Committee, including all the Members on the other side, and many hon. Members who take a great interest in this question on this side of the House, are prepared to go on with the Bill. We admit that it is inconvenient—personally inconvenient to us—to take a discussion of this kind so late at night, after we have already been in the House for a considerable time; but, looking at the period of the Session and to the chances of this important Bill, we are willing to make this sacrifice, and those hon. Gentlemen who are unwilling to make it must, of course, accept the full responsibility of their action. In case the Government should determine to yield to the pressure put upon them by those hon. Members who say they are anxious that this Bill should pass, and that they are doing their best to enable it to pass, I should like the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury to make some statement as to the future progress of the measure. If the Bill is not to be proceeded with, we should be made acquainted with that decision of the Government as soon as possible, in order that we need not give attendance and exercise our minds with regard to a measure the fate of which is a foregone conclusion. If, on the other hand, Her Majesty's Government are determined that this measure shall receive the final decision of this House, then I think we have arrived at such a period of the Session that some definite statement of the kind I suggest ought to be made by the Government.

MR. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): I hope that even yet the right hon. Member for Central Bradford will consent to forego this Motion, more especially as the opinion of the hon. Gentleman in whose name the next Amendment stands is that we should go on. I hope the Government will make it clear that, under all circumstances, however the measure may be opposed by any limited number of Gentlemen in any part of the House, they will carry the Bill before the Session concludes.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I have no hesitation in responding to the appeal made to me by the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Chamberlain). I think that we should mark the course which has been pursued to-night at all events by a Division, in order that we may find upon the Division List who it is that is obstructing this Bill. There is no doubt that if hon. Members desire the postponement, and resolve to oppose the further progress of the Bill this evening, they can do so. They can stop its further progress as far as this Sitting is concerned; but I wish it to be distinctly understood that no efforts will be spared on the part of the Government to pass the Bill this Session. We will be no party to a Prorogation until this Bill is passed. Whatever facilities our past experience in this House have shown as expedients for us to adopt in order to make progress, we shall certainly in the future apply. I do not think it necessary to say further than that on this occasion—to say more than that we shall lose no opportunity of forwarding this Bill, and that it is our intention of ultimately passing it into law.

MR. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): It is true that I some time ago expressed my willingness to go on with the Amendment; but after what has passed, seeing that it is the evident desire of many hon. Members to discuss this question in the only adequate way it can be discussed, at a proper hour of the night, I should be exceedingly ill-advised if I were not to support the Motion of my right hon. Friend (Mr. Shaw Lefevre). I may add that I am heartily glad to have heard the announcement which has been at last elicited from the Leader of the House—the pledge that we shall have this question settled during the present Session of Parliament. [*Laughter.*] It is all very well for hon. Members to laugh; but I shall say what I have to say. Those whom I represent are deeply interested in this question; and we shall not only insist that this measure shall be passed, but that it shall be passed, as far as our powers will enable us to pass it, with those principles adopted, and those Amendments added to it, which will render it a useful and workable measure, and a boon to the people of this country.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: I am quite willing to take upon myself the responsibility of stopping the Committee on the Bill at this point. It is unreasonable to ask us to proceed further at this time of the morning. I must repudiate the imputation made by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham just now, and made a few nights ago against Members on this side of the House. I can speak with more independence on this subject, because, as the right hon. Gentleman knows, I have supported the Government on almost every Amendment made in this House. I think that on only one important amendment I have voted against them. Though I disagree in many important matters with many hon. Gentlemen around me, yet we have now arrived at a point of great importance, and to a matter which ought to be discussed, as it affects vitally the interests of men we represent outside this House; and I think, therefore, the suggestion now made is a most reasonable one. There is every desire on this side of the House that the measure should pass into law. I am perfectly ready to stay up in London another couple of days—[An hon. MEMBER: No; weeks]—in order that this Bill may be carried. If the Government is not prepared to give these two days to the discussion of the Bill, then I think the country will perfectly well understand that the reason the Bill is not carried is that too much of the Session has been wasted in the passing of Coercion Acts, that there has been no time to devote to the necessities of the agricultural labourers.

MR. RITCHIE: The right hon. Gentleman talks about stopping up in London for a couple of days. I have no doubt, from his point of view, he endures a great deal of hardship, and makes a great deal of sacrifice; but I would point out that there is a great deal of Business which this House must transact before it can prorogue. It is not a question of a couple of days; but with the exigencies of Supply, and other matters which the House has to discuss before it can separate, it is essential that if the Bill is to pass into law we should make rapid progress with it while we have time. I would point out that, no doubt, what the right hon. Gentleman has said is true—namely, that the Amendment which comes next is very important; but I would point out that the question of compulsory purchase is a question which has been discussed again and again during the progress of this Bill. ["No, no!"] I beg pardon, the question of value has been discussed again and again. But, whether that is so or not, whatever can be said for or against the Amendment can be said within half-an-hour, and I do hope that the Committee will devote at least another half-hour to this Bill, and endeavour to settle this particular question which, I admit, is an important one, but which does not require very much discussion.

MR. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley): It is evident the great majority of this Committee are anxious to proceed with the Bill; therefore I think that, for that reason alone, we might appeal to the right hon. Gentleman to give way to the general wish of hon. Members, particularly as the fate of the Bill depends upon the progress now made. We have been two nights debating this Bill, and have not finished yet three clauses. We have been two hours to-night debating one Amendment moved by the hon. Member for the Ashburton Division of Devonshire (Mr. Seale-Hayne); and I think, seeing that the Committee is in good working order and anxious to make substantial progress with the Bill, the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Shaw Lefevre) ought to defer to the general wish of Members and finish the consideration of this clause, especially as, as has been pointed out incidentally, this clause has been discussed on and off ever since the Bill has been before the House.

MR. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby): It has been stated that if the Bill is not proceeded with now, there is a chance of its being lost. There is no chance of its being lost, because the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) has pledged us his word that it shall be carried. I regret very much indeed that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) should have taken this mode of introducing matters into which I am not going to enter myself. I regret all the more that this remark should have induced the First Lord of the Treasury to forget the undertaking he gave to the House earlier in the evening. It will be remembered that the right hon. Gentleman suggested that the Bill should be taken for a couple of hours to-night. We have now been debating it for upwards of two hours and a-half, and I certainly think it is most unreasonable we should be asked to go further.

Question put.

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 28; Noes 136: Majority 108.—(Div. List, No. 422.) [3.5 A.M.]

MR. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): I now beg to move that—

> "The price to be paid for land acquired by compulsory purchase under this Act shall be such a sum as shall, in the opinion of such arbitrator, be the fair market value of such land, without any addition being made for compulsory purchase."

I propose to add this as the 4th subsection of the Amendment which has been adopted by the Committee on the suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board; and I will do so, in consideration of the convenience of the Committee, in as brief a form as possible. I must say, however, that considering the very great importance that has been attached to the subject by many Members of this House who have gone thoroughly into it, and have expressed their opinions upon it as an essential point of this Bill—perhaps the most essential point of this Bill—it really seems to me unreasonable that we should be called upon to discuss such a very vital question at this hour (3.15) of the morning. If the feeling of the Committee is that we should proceed, I wish to say that I heartily welcome the alteration of procedure proposed by the President of the Local Government Board, because it carries out exactly what I have had in my mind, and is practically the same on principle as the Amendment which I laid on the Table of the House some four or five hours before the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Ritchie) announced his own proposal—namely, the assimilation of the procedure of this Bill. [*Interruption.*] I hope hon. Gentlemen will do me the kindness to listen to my remarks without interruption, especially as they have insisted upon proceeding with this discussion at this unreasonable hour. The Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman carries out my own views, and assimilates the general procedure of this Act to the general procedure of the Artizans' Dwellings Acts. Let me remind the Legal Representatives of the Government of the wording of the Act of 1879—the Artizans' Dwellings Act, 1879, amending the Artizans' Dwellings Act, 1868 — the 7th clause of which Act distinctly introduces the principle that there shall be no addition for compulsory purchase. The Act of 1882 carries that principle one step further, for it prohibits the arbitrator, appointed by the Local Government Board in the same way I suggested, going into all the circumstances which might increase and add to the expense of the compulsory purchase of land. I therefore wish to point out that the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board has adopted the principle of the Artizans' Dwellings Acts, and I ask him to adopt those principles in their entirety, and not to treat the agricultural labourers and those who wish to obtain land under this Act in a different spirit from that in which the town population has been treated under the Artizans' Dwellings Acts. It seems to me quite essential that we should adopt some such Amendment as I have suggested. There are many illustrations to be obtained from the most important evidence which has been laid before the House and the country on this subject in the Report of the Royal Commission of 1885, which sat on the housing of the working classes; and I refer hon. Members who may not have examined that Report as fully as I have had an opportunity of doing to some parts of the Report which show the absolute necessity of importing into this Act the principle of my Amendment. Dr. Downes, of Chelmsford, says that the arbitration price of land always enormously expands as soon as it is known that the land is wanted for sanitary purposes. This gentleman further instanced before the Royal Commission the case of a quarter of an acre of salt marsh land in Essex, for which the Sanitary Authority had to pay no less than £244, besides their solicitor's costs. The price alone paid to the owner was

£172. On being questioned as to the actual market value of this land, Dr. Downes stated that the market value did not amount to more than £20. I ask the Government, or the majority of the Committee, if they are really in earnest in wishing to enable Local Authorities to buy land without paying for it such an excessive price that they cannot let it without loss to the rates? Dr. Downes was of opinion that where land had clearly no other value, so far as one can judge, but an agricultural value, the price paid should be no more than such agricultural value. My right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) has dealt with this question very fully; he has dealt with it very fully in the somewhat interesting episode before the Royal Commission. On the Commission there was a sort of duel between the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. J. Chamberlain) and Lord Salisbury, who presided over the Commission at that time, in which Lord Salisbury tried to press upon the right hon. Gentleman his principle of compulsory purchase, and in which the right hon. Gentleman maintained successfully his own principle that nothing extra should be paid for compulsory purchase. The right hon. Gentleman went into his own experiences with regard to the town of Birmingham, and he showed that, even with regard to those districts where they were permitted to apply the procedure of the Artizans' Dwellings Act, the loss was exceedingly heavy; but that if the procedure of the Artizans' Dwellings Act had not been invoked the loss would have been still heavier. I sincerely hope, in dealing with this Amendment, that I have shown some ground why the Government should yield to my proposal. It seems to me only reasonable, when you consider that all you want to secure is that a certain number of humble men should add to their income, to the small comforts of their home, and elevate themselves and their children in the way that they can by labour of this kind, that you should really make your Bill a genuine Bill, and enable the Local Authorities to buy land at a reasonable price, at a fair market value, and not saddle the Local Authority with all these fancy values that the practice of arbitration has added, mainly, as is well known, in order to meet the unreasonable fears and prejudices that were raised upon the introduction of the great railway schemes of 40 years ago. These rules of arbitration are largely due to the jealousy of landowners of the railway system. On the 11th of January last year the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, in a remarkable speech of special moment, pointed out that the country was saddled with £2,000,000 a-year by the introduction of this principle in regard to railways only. If the Government really intend the agricultural labourers and the artizans to have allotments at a reasonable agricultural rent, a rent which would let the allotment tenant live and thrive, I ask how they are to carry that out unless they enable the Local Authorities to buy at a reasonable price? It is monstrous to allow extra values to be imported into the consideration of the purchase. I feel quite sure that in this Amendment I shall have the hearty support of my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham. I can hardly imagine that he can refuse to give his support to a proposal carrying out his own principle, to which he attached such vital importance in the speech to which I have referred, and in which he said a good many hard things of the Tory Party for finding fault with him for asserting that Local Authorities should be able to buy land at a reasonable price without fanciful additions on account of compulsory purchase. I should like to know why any landowner should get any more than he would obtain if his land was let to an agricultural tenant? If he let it to allotment holders, he would have to add to the rent, the rates, and tithes, and this would be fair and just. But in this case, when giving up his land to the Local Authority, that he should have additional values paid over to him over and above the actual market value of his land seems to me perfectly monstrous and absurd. But the main point on which I rest my Amendment is this—that if you do not adopt a principle of this kind, you would be acting inconsistently with the principle adopted in the Bill, and render it absolutely nugatory and futile for the purposes intended—namely, to provide labourers with land at an agricultural rent. I would remind the President of the Local Government Board that he himself said, on the second reading, that one of the principles of this Bill was that labourers and artizans should get the land at an agricultural value. I do not believe that is stated in the Bill, and I think that is one of the points where we want further definition; but, however that may be, if he is really in earnest, I do invite him to have the fairness and consistency to adopt my Amendment, and make this Bill a real and a valuable one.

Amendment proposed,

At the end of the last Amendment, to insert the words—"(*d.*) The price to be paid for land acquired by compulsory purchase under this Act shall be such a sum as shall, in the opinion of such arbitrator, be the fair market value of such lands, without any addition being made for compulsory purchase." — (*Mr. Channing.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER) (Isle of Wight): I shall not follow the hon. Member in the somewhat lengthy disquisition he has given; but if he imagines that the terms he demands are corresponding to the Artizans' Dwellings Act he is under a mistake. He has given us a long disquisition as to the price and value of land for railway purposes. There was no necessity for that, because land is now valued at market value; and if no direction were given at all, it would be taken at the fair market value at the time it is taken. The allowance of 10 per cent, or whatever amount be given, for compulsory sale arose in this way. The Act says nothing about allowance for compulsory sale. It is perfectly well known that it was a development of the system of valuation. You may have land that is valuable on account of its growing into accommodation land, or for building purposes, and those who first had to form an estimate under the words "full and fair compensation" decided that an allowance to cover contingencies should be given, and accordingly the custom of giving 10 per cent was introduced until it now prevailed. It is perfectly true, though not in any Statute, that it has been recognized in Courts of Law and by the Legislature on several occasions. It is important to remember that everyone with land bought compulsorily has had the compensation assessed on the same basis as land compulsorily taken for gas works and water works, which are not in the same category. There is one exception made, and that was made in connection with the Artizans' Dwellings Act, which was for the purpose of providing dwellings for the poor. In respect of healthy properties, compensation was given for compulsory sale, but not in respect of unhealthy properties. What I submit to the Committee is this—that if there is to be any alteration in the law, it should be by some general enactment that would apply in all matters where land is taken compulsorily. I submit there is no reason why, when land is bought compulsorily, that either standard of compensation shall be fixed, and we have nothing to do with the fancy values the hon. Gentleman has referred to. The whole argument of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) was directed to the fancy values for land taken for railway purposes. [Mr. CHANNING: That was in January, 1886.] No one can suggest, with respect to agricultural land, any such question has been raised, and I therefore simply say that, with regard to market value, there is no dispute and no necessity for the Amendment; and, with regard to the present value, no charge is necessary, or, if there is, it should be made by a general enactment.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I beg to move that you do leave the Chair.

THE CHAIRMAN: Probably the hon. Member would be content with moving to report Progress?

MR. CONYBEARE: Yes, Mr. Courtney; I will move that you report Progress.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. Conybeare.*)

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman if the Bill will be reprinted as far as it has gone?

MR. RITCHIE: I hope the Committee will not consent to report Progress. I think the Committee is competent to come to a decision, and I hope they will be prepared to dispose of this

Amendment. With reference to the reprint of the Bill, I would point out that, so far as we have gone, there is not much Amendment in the Bill, except the insertion of this provision, which I hope the Committee will assent to, and I hope, in any case, the Committee will not consent to report Progress.

MR. CONYBEARE: I think it is one more flagrant instance of the way in which the Government break faith. We were distinctly promised we should not work more than two hours. We have now been working three hours, and we could not dispose of the Amendments in two or three more hours. It is all very well for hon. Gentlemen who enjoy themselves on their moors and in their yachts—["Oh, oh!"]—they certainly have not been here, and I take my stand upon the declaration made by the Leader of the House, and I maintain at this hour of the morning, when we have to resume to-morrow, and are sitting six and not five days a-week, it is unheard of and monstrous to ask hon. Gentlemen to go on.

MR. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): There is no breach of faith whatever on the part of the Government; it is entirely in the imagination of the hon. Member. The hon. Member asked the Committee to consent to sit for two hours, but there was nothing said about not desiring to sit for more than two hours; and, under those circumstances, and after the Division we have just had, which showed that three-fourths of the Committee desired to proceed, why should the hon. Member object to go on? I have had the honour of a seat in this House for a good many years; but I never remember such a course to be pursued as that adopted by the hon. Member. He has contributed nothing to the information of the Committee, and if he would accept my advice he would go home, and allow us to proceed with the Bill.

MR. SEALE-HAYNE (Devon, Ashburton): I do hope the Government will consent to report Progress. ["No!"] I do not think I have unduly occupied the attention of the Committee; but this is a question of very great importance, which we should like to speak upon. Our constituents desire to know what is our opinion on this subject, which they cannot do when the discussion is taken at this time in the morning, as what we say is not reported. I think that is a very legitimate reason for asking the Committee to consent to report Progress.

The Committee proceeded to a Division, and the Chairman stated that he thought the Noes had it; and, his decision being challenged, he directed the Ayes to stand up in their places, and fifteen Members only having stood up, the Chairman declared the Noes had it.

Original Question again proposed.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I claim to move "That the Question be now put."

Question put accordingly, "That the Question be now put."

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 129; Noes 28: Majority 101.—(Div. List, No. 423.) [3.40 A.M.]

Original Question put.

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 41; Noes 118: Majority 77.—(Div. List, No. 424.) [3.50. A.M.]

MR. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby): As the Committee shows it does not wish for any further discussion, I will simply move the next Amendment in my name. The words will, I think, explain the object.

Amendment proposed, as an addition to Mr. Ritchie's Amendment (Clause 3, page 2, line 32), add—

> "(d.) If the compensation ordered to be paid to any vendor under any arbitration under this section shall not exceed an amount which the sanitary authority shall, before the appointment of the arbitrator, have offered in writing to the vendor, he shall pay all costs, fees, charges, and expenses of every description relating to such arbitration;
>
> "(e.) The arbitrator shall, in case of difference, decide the amount of costs, fees, charges, and expenses to be allowed in respect of the arbitrator, or any matter arising thereon, and in no case shall any fee or expenses be allowed to more than one surveyor or witness as to value on the part of the sanitary authority and vendor respectively."—(*Mr. Cobb.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE)

(Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I am afraid that the Government cannot assent to this Amendment.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): It seems to me that this is a very practical Amendment indeed, and I cannot understand why the right hon. Gentleman opposite objects to it. I suppose the real explanation is that hon. Members opposite object to everything, and they do not want to discuss this Bill. I can quite understand that probably at this hour in the morning they are not in a condition to discuss it, and under these circumstances, Mr. Courtney, it is perfectly absurd to attempt to go on with anything like serious legislation at this hour.

MR. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley): Speak for yourself.

MR. CONYBEARE: Well, I am speaking for myself; I usually do. Under these circumstances, I claim to move that the whole clause be now put.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member is not in Order in making such a Motion.

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): The last Motion was a Closure Motion, and therefore this Motion would be consequential.

THE CHAIRMAN: No.

MR. CHANCE: After a Motion to report Progress has been closured and negatived, the whole clause has been put. That was done several times while the Coercion Bill was before the House.

THE CHAIRMAN: Just so; but in the interval another Motion was made that certain words be inserted, therefore this is not consequential.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): I think some hon. Gentlemen above the Gangway on this side of the House are taking a mistaken course in regard to Amendments to this Bill. I think it is their duty to press the Amendments on the Government, and to call upon the Government to reject them if they deem it wise to do so. This will expose the conduct of hon. Members who insist on discussions taking place at an hour in the morning when it is impossible that adequate discussion should take place. I therefore propose to move that you report Progress and ask leave to sit again. So far as I am concerned hon. Gentlemen above the Gangway may or may not support me; but I do not intend to sit here any longer to support any Amendment which is not seriously intended and is not to be seriously discussed. What is the good of taking part in a sham? I do not see any good in it, and if they do not see any good in supporting or voting for them it would be far better to let the whole Bill pass without further discussion. Here we have hon. Gentlemen who assume to be the friends of the labourers supporting Motions which practically smother discussion.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. T. M. Healy.*)

MR. RITCHIE: The Amendments to Clause 3 not yet dealt with are, with the exception of the one now before the House, of a very trifling character. I therefore hope the hon. and learned Member will not press his Motion for reporting Progress. The Government will consent to progress being reported after Clause 3 has been disposed of, and it ought to take but very few minutes to do that, as some of the Amendments are out of Order, and some relate to very small matters.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): I think the Committee having gone so far as they have done might as well finish the clause. I think it is a little unreasonable to expect us to go on with the discussion; but after the way in which the last Amendment was carried, it is only right further discussion should take place, and an opportunity for that will occur on the Report stage. The remaining Amendments to the clause are altogether unimportant, so I hope we will dispose of them, and then adjourn. For my part, I do not intend to stay any longer.

MR. T. M. HEALY: After what has fallen from the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board, I will ask leave to withdraw my Motion.

MR. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.): I am exceedingly sorry that my hon. and learned Friend proposes to withdraw his Motion. It is a scandal for us to be here taking part in the solemn farce of pretending to discuss important Amendments to a Bill at 4 o'clock in the morning without the slightest idea of the decisions arrived at upon them being influenced by either argument or common sense. If this goes on, the only value attaching to this Bill will be that of waste paper. It seems to me that it is only an electioneering dodge, and not a single allotment is likely to be given in accordance with its provisions. Hon. Gentlemen above the Gangway should do one of two things: they should either fight this clause in a *bond fide* manner, or let the Government pass the Bill as they passed the Coercion Bill.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Original Question put.

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 16; Noes 133: Majority 117.—(Div. List, No. 425.) [3.55 A.M.]

Amendment proposed, in page 2, line line 34, after "Act," insert "together with any Act confirming a Provisional Order under this section."—(*Mr. Ritchie.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): Surely the right hon. Gentleman is not going to move an Amendment without telling the Committee what it is about.

The PRESIDENT of the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. Ritchie) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): It is merely a formal Amendment. My hon. and learned Friend the Member for the Kingswinford Division of Staffordshire (Mr. Staveley Hill) pointed out that, in his opinion, these words were necessary to make the clause clear. On examination we find there is a good deal to be said for the view he takes, so we move the Amendment, in order to secure that the Bill shall not come to an end in the way he fears.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Mr. SEALE-HAYNE (Devon, Ashburton): The object of the Amendment I am about to move is to leave out a lot of surplus words which really have no purpose there. I apprehend that no Sanitary Authority will require to take a park, garden, or pleasure ground, and if the words I propose to leave out are omitted, I think the clause, as amended, will provide ample protection for the landlord.

Amendment proposed, in page 2, line 40, to leave out from "the following," to "have regard," in page 3, line 4, both inclusive, and insert "regard shall be had."—(*Mr. Seale-Hayne.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir Richard Webster) (Isle of Wight): We cannot possibly accept this Amendment. If the words are left out there will be no protection of any kind against parks and pleasure grounds being taken. It is necessary that some provision should be inserted.

Mr. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): I invite my hon. Friend to withdraw his Amendment, as I am exceedingly anxious that the Government should consider favourably an Amendment which stands in my name to extend Sub-section A, so as to include existing allotments.

Mr. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): The hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General has hardly stated with his usual fairness the result of the Amendment. Under these words all resonable rights of a landowner would be safeguarded. We have heard a great deal from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) about the danger of tying the hands of a Sanitary Authority; but now when it comes to the question of giving some reasonable power to that authority, I suppose the right hon. Gentleman will go into the Lobby against it. I submit that there may be cases in which land will be alleged to be park, garden, or pleasure grounds, when it is really only agricultural land, and unless you accept this Amendment the Local Authority will be precluded from taking such ground for allotment. If the clause is allowed to stand as at present in the Bill, it will merely afford an ingenious and simpler method whereby landowners can get out of any operation of the Act; they can plant a few shrubs or sticks in the ground, and say it is a garden, knowing the great elasticity in which the Courts in Ireland interpret such words as "home farm." I am afraid they will only afford a landlord an escape from doing what he ought.

Mr. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley): I can hardly think the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Seale-Hayne) is serious in putting down such an Amendment as this. The only purpose it can serve is to continue a discussion that we all know is useless; for everyone knows they would not give power to interfere with parks and pleasure gardens. There is no earthly use for such an Amendment, except to take up the time of the Committee.

MR. SEALE-HAYNE: I think it might frequently be necessary to take a portion of a farm, and I must therefore insist upon it.

MR. CONYBEARE: We all know there are plenty of parks that extend for mile upon mile in this country, and what does any man want with some hundreds or thousands of acres round his house, except to be selfish enough to hide himself from the gaze of his neighbours? I know of some great parks where you have miles and miles of drive up to the house, and it is absurd to say in all these cases the necessity might not arise for taking an out of the way corner which would not injure the park, and might be most important to the district. There is Chatsworth, for instance, where there is almost a village standing in the middle of the park, and if it was necessary that a portion of that should be taken, I see no reason why it should not be done. I hope, therefore, the Amendment will be pressed to a Division.

MR. WINTERBOTHAM (Gloucester, Cirencester): I appeal to my hon. Friend (Mr. Seale Hayne) not to press this Amendment. What we want is agricultural land at an agricultural price, and we do not want to interfere with parks and pleasure grounds.

MR. SEALE-HAYNE: I will not press it.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. JEFFREYS (Hants, Basingstoke): I wish to move the Amendment standing in my name—namely, to insert the words "or meadow land," and I do so because I think it most important to farmers.

Amendment proposed, in page 2, line 43, after the words "pleasure ground" to insert the words "or meadow land."—(*Mr. Jeffreys.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I hope the hon. Member will defer his Amendment until the Report, because I am not quite sure whether the exact words he proposes will meet the case he wishes to bring before the Committee.

MR. JEFFREYS: I will postpone my Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. F. S. POWELL (Wigan): I will also defer my Amendment in the same place, in order to meet the convenience of the Committee.

MR. MAC INNES (Northumberland, Hexham): The Amendment in my name proposes to deal with land owned by Railway Companies, which has not yet been brought into use, and I hope the Government will accept it.

Amendment proposed, in page 3, line 2, after "dwelling-house," insert "or any land the property of a Railway Company which is, or may be, required for the purposes of their undertaking."—(*Mr. Mac Innes.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. RITCHIE: I think it is a very reasonable Amendment.

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I think it would be better if it ran in this form—"or any land already compulsorily acquired by any Public Company for their undertaking." That would apply to other Companies than Railway Companies, and you may require to take land from gas works and water works.

THE CHAIRMAN: Will the hon. Member (Mr. Mac Innes) put it in that form?

MR. MAC INNES: The suggestion of the hon. Member (Mr. Chance) comes upon me suddenly; but, so far as I can consider it off-hand, it appears to be reasonable.

MR. RITCHIE: I think the words suggested by the hon. Member for South Kilkenny might be accepted, and we would consider the question between now and Report, and if necessary alter them upon Report.

MR. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): The words of the hon. Member for South Kilkenny are not so satisfactory as the words of the original proposal, which applies to the land required by a Railway Company for their undertaking; but the Amendment of the hon. Member for South

Kilkenny includes all land in the same category.

Mr. CHANCE: I would propose, then, merely to add "Railway, Gas, or Water Company."

Mr. RITCHIE: It would be better if the hon. Member will allow us to accept the Amendment as it stands on the Paper, and then it can be altered on Report if necessary.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Mr. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): I hope the Committee will consent to accept the small addition I propose by my Amendment to the clause. I think it most desirable that existing allotments should be excluded from the compulsory powers of the Act. This is a point on which some of my own constituents feel strongly.

Amendment proposed,

In page 3, line 2, after "house," insert "or any labourers' allotments or allotment gardens, whether attached to, or detached from cottages, or any places of worship or education, or any churchyard or burial ground." — (*Mr. Channing.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. RITCHIE: I cannot conceive any demand to purchase any churchyard or burial ground, and therefore I think the proposal is quite unnecessary. It is quite possible labourers may have allotments that may be of too high a rent, and it might be necessary for the local authority to apply for power to take the land at a smaller amount.

Mr. CHANCE: They would have to do that on the basis of excessive rent.

Mr. RITCHIE: No doubt. I hope the hon. Gentleman will withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Mr. CHANCE: I think it would be very desirable to allow leases to be made for a term not exceeding 35 years, as 21 years is rather a short period. I therefore move that.

Amendment proposed, in page 3, line 14, to leave out the words "twenty-one," in order to insert the words "thirty-five."—(*Mr. Chance.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'twenty-one' stand part of the Clause."

Mr. RITCHIE: I think that 21 years is sufficiently long, and it is a term much better known in this country than that of 35 years, which is quite an unknown quantity for a lease in this country. Twenty-one years is a term that is generally understood.

Mr. CHANCE: All I can say is, that legislation in this instance is proceeding backwards. The whole tendency of modern land legislation is to increase the power of the limited owner. I think it is unreasonable to ask people to erect a little dwelling or greenhouse upon land, the term for which will run out in 21 years, and I believe it would prevent the tenants improving the place. In face of the Settled Land Acts, I say that 35 years is not an unknown or unreasonable term at law. I must press the Amendment, which only asks for a small concession, though it is a real one, and I do not think the right hon. Gentleman should object to it.

Mr. CHAPLIN: I am quite certain the hon. Member would find they would be ready to make any of these improvements on a lease of 21 years.

Mr. WINTERBOTHAM: If this Amendment is pressed to a Division I shall support it. In the neighbourhood of towns allotments will be largely taken by the better class of labourers, for the purposes of growing fruit and glass culture, and 35 years lease is not unreasonable. It is a small concession, and if you cannot give the 35 make it 28.

Mr. CONYBEARE: I am opposed to any limitation of the kind, and I cannot understand why hon. Gentlemen opposite wish to tie down the hands of contracting parties by putting in these words. Why should not the parties be perfectly free to make their own arrangements in point of time as well as in respect of other conditions? It is totally foreign to sound legislation.

Mr. RITCHIE: As it is only an enabling clause, I will accept the Amendment.

Question put, and *negatived.*

Question, "That the words 'thirty-five' be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

Amendment proposed,

In page 3, at end, insert the following sub-section:—"The county or any other authority shall not acquire any right to minerals, nor prejudice the rights to minerals, under such lands."—(*Mr. Ainslie.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. CONYBEARE: I think it would be most undesirable to add these words, and lay down a principle of this kind. As it is, the reservation of mines and minerals by written title is a curse and a burden to the industry of this country; and if there was any excuse by which we could invest in the community at large the rights wrongly taken from the people, we ought certainly to avail ourselves of it. I shall certainly oppose this Amendment, because I consider if you are giving the community a right to the compulsory acquisition of land, everything beneath the land should go along with the surface. That is the principle which landowners themselves act upon, and they would never think of taking the surface without the minerals, or of depriving themselves of the minerals; and therefore I say that what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. In this case, there is every reason why the community should have the benefit of the minerals.

MR. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley): The hon. Member's constituents will be very much surprised at the views of the hon. Gentleman.

MR. CONYBEARE: No, they will not.

MR. JESSE COLLINGS: Then they will not have any chance of obtaining allotments, if they have to pay the price of minerals under them; and I am surprised that the hon. Member should make any such ridiculous and insincere remarks.

MR. CHANCE: On this occasion I find myself in unexampled accordance with the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham; but I do not think the Amendment goes far enough, as it does not prescribe that the full value shall not be paid; and I would move to add to the Amendment the words, "nor shall compensation be paid by them in respect thereof."

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER) (Isle of Wight): That would not be the right way to introduce it; it should be done by a Definition Clause, that the land should not include the minerals. It would be ridiculous to buy the minerals when they would have no power to get them; but we will consider the matter between this and Report.

MR. CONYBEARE: If it should be found that, when the allotments had been taken, there were minerals under them, why should the community be deprived of the benefit of them, and allow a landlord who had sold the land without knowing anything of the minerals, to have the advantage of them? I shall certainly press the matter.

MR. HANDEL COSSHAM (Bristol, E.): It has been decided in Courts of Law that minerals include all substances under the soil, and that there is no such thing as land without minerals; therefore, the Reservation Clause would have to be general.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

MR. RITCHIE: I beg now, Sir, to propose that you do report Progress; and upon this question I would say the Government propose to take the Bill again on Saturday, when they rely upon the Committee to render them all the assistance in their power to complete the Bill on that day.

MR. CONYBEARE: When is it proposed to take the Mines Regulation Bill again?

MR. RITCHIE: I am unable to speak as to that; but I will communicate with the First Lord of the Treasury as to the course of Business, and due Notice will be given.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. Ritchie.*)

MR. COBB: I wish to appeal to the right hon. Gentleman that, as we are at this point, we may as well finish the Bill. We have already been more than double the time we ought to have been, and it would be better now to finish it.

MR. RITCHIE: The hon. Gentleman has not made that suggestion seriously?

MR. COBB: I did.

MR. RITCHIE: He must know that I could not meet him, and that we are under an engagement to report Progress directly Clause 3 was completed; and, therefore, it is necessary we should report Progress.

MR. CHANNING: The statement of the right hon. Gentleman is not quite correct. The First Lord of the Treasury said we were to go on for two hours in Committee. Then the right hon. Gentleman said the Government wished to go on till they reached a controversial point, and then, when the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Central Bradford (Mr. Shaw Lefevre) moved to report Progress, it was agreed, after that Motion, to go on until my Amendment was disposed of. I shall take some opportunity of pointing out to the country the action of the Government in dealing with this Bill and that the most important Amendment to-night has been closured by the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury, and that he was supported by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain), although the matter under discussion was just that principle to which he had attached formerely such importance.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): Will the Saturday Sitting be subject to the Wednesday Rule?

Mr. RITCHIE: I apprehend that my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House is under an engagement to apply the Wednesday Rule.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL: After our experience of last Saturday, I do not see the use of Members coming down here to do nothing.

Mr. COBB: I shall come down perfectly prepared to finish the Bill, and I would appeal to the right hon. Gentleman to let us have whatever Amendments he has now to propose by to-morrow morning.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL: I beg to give Notice that I shall oppose any Motion to apply the Wednesday Rule to the Sitting of Saturday next.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon *Saturday.*

House adjourned at a quarter before Five o'clock in the morning.

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TO

HANSARD'S PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES,

VOLUME CCCXIX.

TENTH VOLUME OF SESSION 1887.

Explanation of the Abbreviations.

Bills, Read 1°, 2°, 3°, or 1^a, 2^a, 3^a, Read the First, Second, or Third Time.—In Speeches 1R., 2R., 3R., Speech delivered on the First, Second, or Third Reading.—*Amendt.*, Amendment.—*Res.*, Resolution.—*Comm.*, Committee.—*Re-Comm.*, Re-Committal.—*Rep.*, Report.—*Consid.*, Consideration.—*Adj.*, Adjournment or Adjourned.—*cl.*, Clause.—*add. cl.*, Additional Clause.—*neg.*, Negatived.—*M. Q.*, Main Question.—*O. Q.*, Original Question.—*O. M.*, Original Motion.—*P. Q.*, Previous Question.—R. P., Report Progress.—*A.*, Ayes.—*N.*, Noes.—*M.*, Majority.—*1st. Div.*, *2nd. Div.*, First or Second Division.—*l.*, Lords.—*c.*, Commons.

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When in the Text or in the Index a Speech is marked thus *, it indicates that the Speech is reprinted from a Pamphlet or some authorized Report.

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Caldwell, Mr. J., *Glasgow, St. Rollox*
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CAREW, Mr. J. L., *Kildare, N.*
- Burmah—Bombay-Burmah Trading Corporation, 1358
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- Irish Land Law, Commons' Amendts. Consid. *cl.* 1, 21; *cl.* D, Amendt. 32; *cl.* E, Amendt. 34; *cl.* 20, Amendt. 37

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- Question, Mr. Pickersgill; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Sir Henry Holland) *Aug* 16, 677

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- Irish Land Law, Lords' Amendts. to Commons' Amendts. Consid. 280, 281, 282, 1002
- Labourers' Allotments, Comm. *cl.* 1, 1130; *cl.* 2, 1153, 1179, 1181, 1195; *cl.* 3, 1935, 1945, 1947, 1949, 1966

CHANCE, Mr. P. A., *Kilkenny, S.*
- City Companies—Salters' Company—Sale of their Irish Estates, 1364, 1365
- Coal Mines, &c. Regulation, Comm. *cl.* 22, 517, 519, 520; *cl.* 43, 597; *cl.* 49, 642, 643
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- Irish Land Law, Lords' Amendts. to Commons' Amendts. Consid. *cl.* C, 298
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- Licensed Premises (Earlier Closing) (Scotland), Lords' Amendts. Consid. 1683
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CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (*see* GOSCHEN, Right Hon. G. J.)

CHANNING, Mr. F. A., *Northampton, E.*
- Allotments, 1825
- Labourers' Allotments, 2R. 199; Comm. *cl.* 2, 1139, 1141; Amendt. 1144, 1149, 1150, 1155, 1174, 1179, 1193; *cl.* 3, 1212, 1227, 1232, 1928, 1932, 1933, 1943, 1946, 1947, 1950; Amendt. 1953, 1964, 1967, 1970
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Question, Mr. Fisher; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Aug* 16, 671

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Charity Commissioners (Officers) [Salaries]
c. Res. considered in Committee, and agreed to *Aug* 15, 654

Charity Commissioners (Officers) Bill
(*Mr. Jackson, Mr. William Henry Smith*)
c. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" *Aug* 23, 1673; Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*Mr. Arthur O'Connor*); after short debate, Motion withdrawn; Original Question put, and agreed to; Bill read 2° [Bill 362]

CHILDERS, Right Hon. H. C. E., *Edinburgh, S.*
Coal Mines, &c. Regulation, Comm. *cl.* 46, 614, 615, 617; *cl.* 50, 692, 693; *add. cl.* 904
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CHILDERS, Right Hon. H. C. E.—*cont.*
Supply—Crofters' Commission, 1718
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City Companies—The Salters' Company—Sale of their Irish Estates
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Civil Establishments and Elementary Education Acts (England and Wales)—The Royal Commissions
Question, Mr. Kelly; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Aug* 18, 955

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CLANCY, Mr. J. J., *Dublin Co., N.*
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CLARK, Dr. G. B., *Caithness*
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  Crofters' Commission, 1700, 1720
  Deep Sea Exploring Expedition, Report, 1621
  Embassies and Missions Abroad, 1323, 1336, 1337, 1629
  Learned Societies in Great Britain and Ireland, 1600, 1612, 1619
  Metropolitan Police, &c. 1466
  Prisons in England, Wales, and the Colonies, 1474, 1480; Amendt. 1483, 1484
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Clarke, Sir E. G. (Solicitor General), *Plymouth*
  Supply—Supreme Court of Judicature, 1409, 1411, 1412

Coal Mines—Colliery Disaster at Udston, Lanarkshire
  Question, Mr. Mason; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Stuart-Wortley) *Aug* 19, 1109
  [See title *Mines Regulation*]

Coal Mines, &c. Regulation Bill
  Question, Mr. Fenwick; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Aug* 22, 1373
  Weights and Measures Act, 1878, Question, Mr. P. Stanhope; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Aug* 15, 491

Coal Mines, &c. Regulation Bill
(*Mr. Secretary Matthews, Mr. Stuart-Wortley*)
c. Committee [Fourth Night]—R.P. *Aug* 15, 495 [Bill 130]
  Committee [Fifth Night]—R.P. *Aug* 16, 686
  Committee [Sixth Night]—R.P. *Aug* 17, 830
  Committee deferred *Aug* 18, 1060
  Committee [Seventh Night]; Report *Aug* 19, 1250 [Bill 383]

Cobb, Mr. H. P., *Warwick, S.E., Rugby*
  Copyright (Musical Compositions) (No. 2), 2R. Motion for Adjournment, 829
  Labourers' Allotments, 2R. 198; Comm. 307, 309, 317, 318, 338, 339, 1117; *cl.* 1, 1132; *cl.* 2, 1143, 1148, 1152; Amendt. 1159, 1165; Amendt. 1169, 1182, 1194, 1199; *cl.* 3, 1225; Amendt. 1226, 1227, 1915, 1918, 1920, 1921, 1952, 1960, 1970, 1972

Coghill, Mr. D. H., *Newcastle-under-Lyme*
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  Coal Mines, &c. Regulation, Comm. *cl.* 50, Rule 8, 729; Rule 12, 769; Amendt. 756

Collings, Mr. J., *Birmingham, Bordesley*
  Labourers' Allotments, 2R. 141, 145, 149, 150, 151, 182; Comm. 309, 1118; *cl.* 1, 1121, 1129; *cl.* 2, 1143, 1149, 1151, 1171, 1175, 1184; *cl.* 3, 1210, 1211, 1928, 1929, 1936, 1952, 1961, 1964, 1969
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Colonies — Secretary of State (*see* Holland, Right Hon. Sir H. T.)

Colonies—Under Secretary of State (*see* Onslow, Earl of)

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  Colonial Maps in the Library of this House, Question, Mr. Kimber; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Sir Henry Holland) *Aug* 15, 479
  Emigration to the Colonies—Imperial Guarantee of Funds, Question, Mr. Kimber; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Aug* 15, 493

Committee of Council on Education—Vice President (*see* Dyke, Right Hon. Sir W. H.)

Commons (England and Wales)—Regulation of Aberdovey Common, Merioneth
  Question, Mr. T. E. Ellis; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Stuart-Wortley) *Aug* 19, 1101

Consolidated Fund—Hereditary Offices—The Master of the Hawks
  Question, Mr. Hanbury; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson); Question, Mr. Bradlaugh [no reply] *Aug* 19, 1105

Contagious Diseases (Animals) Acts—Pleuro-Pneumonia in Ireland
  Question, Sir John Swinburne; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) *Aug* 11, 57

Conveyancing (Scotland) Acts Amendment Bill (*The Lord Advocate, Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland*)
c. Committee; Report *Aug* 11, 205 [Bill 270]
  Considered *; read 3° *Aug* 12
l. Read 1ª * (*M. of Lothian*) *Aug* 15 (No. 233)
  Read 2ª, after short debate *Aug* 25, 1776

CONWAY, Mr. M., *Leitrim, N.*
Supply—Science and Art Department, &c. Amendt. 1544, 1551

CONYBEARE, Mr. C. A. V., *Cornwall, Camborne*
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Coal Mines, &c. Regulation, Comm. *cl.* 40, 571, 586, 587, 588 ; *cl.* 44, 603, 611 ; *cl.* 46, 618, 623 ; *cl.* 48, 625 ; Motion for reporting Progress, 626 ; *cl.* 50, Rule 8, 737 ; Rule 9, Amendt. *ib.* ; Rule 15, 774 ; Rule 23, 783, 786 ; Rule 24, 789, 790 ; Motion for reporting Progress, 800, 802 ; Rule 29, 806 ; Rule 32, Motion for reporting Progress, 812, 813 ; Amendt. 861, 862 ; *cl.* 68, 880, 881 ; *cl.* 75, 889, 895 ; *add. cl.* 910, 1061, 1250
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COOKE, Mr. C. W. R., *Newington, W.*
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Copyhold Enfranchisement Bill [H.L.]
(*Mr. Haldane*)
c. Read 2° * *Aug* 19 [Bill 359]

Copyright (Musical Compositions) (No. 2) Bill (*Mr. Bartley, Mr. Addison, Mr. Dillwyn, Mr. Lawson*) [Bill 322]
c. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" *Aug* 16, 829 ; Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*Mr. Cobb*); after short debate, Question put ; A. 45, N. 31 ; M. 14 (D. L. 393) [3.50 A.M.]

CORBETT, Mr. J., *Worcestershire, Droitwich*
New Guinea—Settlements in the British Province, 945

Coroners Bill [H.L.]
c. Read 1° * *Aug* 15 [Bill 378]

CORRY, Sir J. P., *Armagh, Mid*
Truck, Lords' Amendts. Consid. *cl.* 4, 1245, 1246

COSSHAM, Mr. H., *Bristol, E.*
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- *Affairs of Egypt*, Moved, "That this House do now adjourn" (*Mr. Labouchere*) *Aug* 11, 84; after short debate, Motion withdrawn
- *Arabi Pasha and other Exiles—An Amnesty*, Question, Mr. Evelyn; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) *Aug* 19, 1099; Question, Mr. W. A. Macdonald; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Aug* 19, 1111
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- *The Egyptian Army—Numbers*, Question, Sir George Campbell; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) *Aug* 18, 952
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  - *Abolition of the Corvée—The Native Army*, Question, Sir George Campbell; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) *Aug* 25, 1803
  - *Further Papers*, Question, Mr. Dillon; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) *Aug* 18, 929

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- Secretary for Scotland Act (1885) Amendment, Comm. *cl.* 2, 1749

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- Charity Commissioners (Officers), 2R. 1675
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"Boycotting" at Newport, Co. Mayo, Question, Mr. Johnston; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) *Aug* 11, 48

Criminal Cases at the Summer Assizes, Questions, Mr Sexton, Mr. Johnston, Mr. Edward Harrington; Answers, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Gibson), The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) *Aug* 25, 1818

Powers of Commitment of a County Court Judge, Questions, Mr. P. O'Brien, Mr. Sexton; Answers, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Gibson) *Aug* 25, 1795

M. J. Melvin and James King, Convicted of Criminal Conspiracy at Munster Winter Assizes, Question, Mr. Crilly; Answer, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) *Aug* 18, 928

Case of Philip Quigley, Questions, Mr. P. O'Brien; Answers, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) *Aug* 18, 932

Estate of A. M. Somerville, of Ross, Co. Meath, a Lunatic, Question, Mr. Biggar; Answer, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) *Aug* 18, 931

Major Traill—Sentence on the Lad Killeen, Questions, Mr. Carew, Mr. Johnston, Mr. Sexton, Mr. M'Cartan; Answers, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman), Mr. Speaker *Aug* 16, 665; Questions, Mr. Johnston; Answers, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) *Aug* 19, 1099

Mr. Tyrell, J.P., Edenderry, Questions, Dr. Fox; Answers, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) *Aug* 23, 1527

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Ballaghaderrin, Co. Mayo—Charge of Assault, Question, Mr. Dillon; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) *Aug* 11, 55

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Mr. John Hill, J.P., Chairman of Toomebridge Petty Sessions, Question, Mr. Stack; Answer, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) *Aug* 16, 659

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Unsanitary State of Certain Police Barracks, Co. Donegal, Question, Mr. Arthur O'Connor; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) *Aug* 12, 249; Question, Mr. Arthur O'Connor; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Gibson) *Aug* 25, 1807

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Arrest of a Youth for Drunkenness, Question, Mr. P. M'Donald; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) *Aug* 11, 49

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Numbers and Religion of Recruits, Question, Mr. D. Sullivan; Answer, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) *Aug* 22, 1358

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" *Boycotting and Police Protection* (*Ireland*)," Questions, Mr. Sexton; Answers, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) *Aug* 22, 1368;—*Statistical Return*, Questions, Mr. Sexton; Answers, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) *Aug* 23, 1531

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Curtin Family, The, Question, Mr. Kimber; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) *Aug* 11, 69

Firing from an Excursion Train at Coleraine, Question, Mr. Macartney; Answer, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) *Aug* 22, 1348

The Irish National Foresters at Portrush—Firing from a Train, Questions, Mr. Johnston, Mr. Sexton; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) *Aug* 11, 61; Questions, Sir Charles Lewis, Mr. Johnston, Mr. M'Cartan; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) *Aug* 15, 476; Questions, Mr. Johnston, Mr. Macartney, Mr. Sexton; Answers, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) *Aug* 19, 1094

The Police at Kanturk, Questions, Mr. Flynn; Answers, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) *Aug* 22, 1355; Questions, Mr. Flynn, Mr. Sexton; Answers, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Gibson) *Aug* 25, 1812

Riotous Meetings—Orange Meetings at Lurgan and Silverwood, Questions, Mr. M'Cartan; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) *Aug* 15, 483

Riots at Kenmare, Question, Mr. J. O'Connor (Kerry, S.); Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) *Aug* 19, 1113

EVICTIONS (IRELAND)

The Evictions at Bodyke—Expense, Question, Mr. Cox; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) *Aug* 11, 53

The Bodyke Tenantry, Questions, Mr. Dillon; Answers, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) *Aug* 18, 927

Westmeath, Questions, Mr. D. Sullivan; Answers, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Gibson) *Aug* 25, 1801

Ireland—Irish National League (*Special Proclamation*)

Notice of Motion, Mr. W. E. Gladstone *Aug* 24, 1775

Moved, "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, humbly to represent to Her Majesty that there has been laid before this House a Special Proclamation of the Viceroy of Ireland, declaring the Association known as the Irish National League to be a dangerous Association, under 'The Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act, 1887.'

[*cont.*

Ireland—Irish National League—(*Special Proclamation*)—cont.

"That no information has been furnished to Parliament to justify the issue of the said Special Proclamation, by virtue of which Her Majesty's subjects are liable to be punished as criminals without judicial inquiry into the nature of their acts.

"And, that this House, in the absence of such information, prays that the said Proclamation shall not continue in force as to the Association named and described therein" (*Mr. Gladstone*) *Aug* 25, 1827; after long debate, Debate adjourned

Ireland—The Landed Estates Court

Moved, That there be laid before the House, "(1.) Number of Petitions filed during last four years, divided into number each year. (2.) Number of Estates offered for Sale. (3.) Number of Estates in which the Rentals were settled. (4.) Number of Estates in which Receivers were appointed, divided into each year. (5.) Number of Receivers. (6.) Number of Accounts not lodged within the limit of time appointed. (7.) Number of Six Months Settlements of Account. (8.) Number of Yearly Settlements. (9.) Gross Annual Rental under Receivers for each Year. (10.) Gross Amount collected each Year. (11.) Number of Officials attached to Court, and their Salaries. (12.) Number and Salaries of those in Receiver's Department" (*The Lord Ardilaun*) *Aug* 12, 219; after short debate, Motion withdrawn

Irish Land Law Bill

Questions, Mr. Parnell, Mr. Conybeare; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Aug* 12, 263; Question, Mr. Lea; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Aug* 19, 1114

Irish Land Law Bill [H.L.]

(*The Chief Secretary for Ireland, Mr. A. J. Balfour*)

l. Moved, "That the Commons' Amendts. be now considered" *Aug* 11, 3; after debate, Commons' Amendts. considered; certain of the Amendts. agreed to; some agreed to, with Amendts. and with consequential Amendts; two disagreed to

The rest of the Commons' Amendts. agreed to, with Amendts. and with consequential Amendts. to the Bill; and a Committee appointed to prepare Reasons to be offered to the Commons for the Lords disagreeing to certain of their Amendts.; the Committee to meet forthwith

Report from the Committee of the Reasons to be offered to the Commons for the Lords disagreeing to certain of their Amendts.; read, and agreed to; and a message sent to the Commons to return the said Bill with Amendts. and Reasons *Aug* 11

c. Message from the Lords, That they have agreed to certain of the Amendts. made by this House to the Irish Land Law Bill, without any Amendt. and to certain other of the said Amendts. with Amendts., to which they

[*cont.*

Irish Land Law Bill—cont.
desire the concurrence of this House; and have made consequential Amendts. to the Bill, to which they desire the concurrence of this House; and have disagreed to certain of the Amendts. made by this House, for which they assign their Reasons *Aug* 11
Moved, "That the Lords' Amendts. to the Commons' Amendts. be now considered" *Aug* 12, 265; after debate, Motion agreed to
Lords' Amendts. to Commons' Amendts. and consequential Amendts. to the Bill, and Lords Reason for disagreeing to certain of the Commons' Amendts. considered; several agreed to; several disagreed to; postponed Amendts. and Lords Reason to be taken into Consideration upon Thursday next
Order for Consideration of Postponed Amendts. made by the Lords to the Commons' Amendts. and Lords Reason read; several disagreed to *Aug* 18, 966
Moved, "That a Committee be appointed, 'to draw up Reasons to be assigned to the Lords for disagreeing to the Amendts. made by the Lords to the Amendts. made by the Commons to the Irish Land Law Bill, to which this House hath disagreed;'" Motion agreed to; Members nominated
Moved, "That Colonel King-Harman be added to the said Committee" (*Mr. T. M. Healy*); Question put, and agreed to; To withdraw immediately; Three to be the quorum
l. Returned from the Commons with several of the Amendts. made by the Lords to the Amendts. made by the Commons, and of the consequential Amendts. made by the Lords to the Bill, agreed to; several other Amendts. made by the Lords agreed to, with Amendts., and with a consequential Amendt. to the Bill; several other Amendts. disagreed to; and one Amendt. to which the Lords have disagreed insisted on, for which they assign Reasons *Aug* 19, 1092
Commons' Amendts. to Lords' Amendts. to Commons' Amendts, Commons' consequential Amendt., and Commons' Reasons for disagreeing to certain of the Lords' Amendts. and for insisting on one of their Amendts. considered (on motion)
Commons' Amendts. agreed to; and the Lords' Amendts. to which the Commons have disagreed not insisted on
c. Reasons for disagreeing to certain of the Amendts. made by the Lords to the Amendts. made by the Commons, and for insisting on an Amendt. to which the Lords have disagreed, reported, and agreed to; to be communicated to the Lords *Aug* 19
Message from the Lords, That they have agreed to the Amendts. made by this House to the Amendts. made by the Lords to the Amendts. made by this House to the Irish Land Law Bill, and to the consequential Amendt. made by this House to the said Bill, without any Amendt., and do not insist on their Amendts. to which this House has disagreed *Aug* 23
l. Royal Assent *Aug* 23 [50 & 51 *Vict.* c. 33]

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  Agricultural Labourers' Union, 1797
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- Coal Mines, &c. Regulation, Comm. *cl.* 44, 605; *cl.* 48, 627; *cl.* 50, Rule 1, 706; Rule 10, 744; Rule 23, 785; Rule 24, 790; Rule 36, 835, 862; *cl.* 71, Amendt. 882, 883, 884; *cl.* 75, 893

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- Agricultural Department—Cheshire Dairy Institute, 1530, 1531
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- Admiralty—Alleged Misappropriation of Stores at Haulbowline, 1524

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"*Allotment*" — *Explanation of the Term*, Question, Sir George Campbell; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) *Aug* 18, 920

Labourers' Allotments Bill
(*Mr. Ritchie, Mr. Secretary Stanhope, Mr. W. H. Long*) [Bill 329]
c. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" *Aug* 11, 138; after long debate, Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*Mr. Staveley Hill*); after further short debate, Motion withdrawn; Original Question put, and agreed to; Bill read 2°
Committee—r.p. *Aug* 12, 305
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Committee [Second Night]—r.p. *Aug* 25, 1915

Labourers' Allotments (No. 2) Bill
(*Mr. Staveley Hill, Lord Henry Bruce, Mr. Brooke Robinson*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Aug* 16 [Bill 380]

Lacaita, Mr. C. C., *Dundee*
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Lafone, Mr. A., *Southwark, Bermondsey*
Supply—British Museum, &c. 1571
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Re-hearing in Capital Cases of Felony—Legislation, Question, Mr. J. Howard; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Aug* 18, 955

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Case of Miss Cass—Mr. Newton, Metropolitan Police Magistrate, Question, Mr. Conybeare; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Aug* 11, 70

Charge against Mr. H. Inwood, of Assault, Question, Mr. Pickersgill; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Aug* 11, 77

Police Supervision of Disorderly Houses, Questions, Mr. Pickersgill; Answers, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Aug* 16, 676; *Aug* 18, 946 [See title *Highway Acts Metropolitan Police*]

Lawson, Mr. H. L. W., *St. Pancras, W.*

Board of Trade (Railway Department)—Railway Whistle at Night in the Metropolis, 1794

Labourers' Allotments, Comm. *cl.* 2, 1158; *cl.* 3, 1218, 1219, 1220

Metropolis—(Closed Burials Grounds)—State of Whitfield Chapel Burial Ground, Tottenham Court Road, 1794

Public Health—Regent's Canal Basin, 1794

Metropolitan Police Force—Promotion, 243, 244

Metropolitan Police Fund—Superannuation Fund, 243

Parks (Metropolis)—Dogs in the Ornamental Waters, 669

Technical Instruction—Reprint of the Report, 677

Lea, Mr. T., *Londonderry, S.*

Ireland—Irish Land Law Bill, 1114

Irish Land Law, Lords' Amendts. to Commons' Amendts. Consid. 291, 292, 1006

Leahy, Mr. J., *Kildare, S.*

Ireland—Inland Navigation and Drainage—River Barrow, 478

Lefevre, Right Hon. G. J. Shaw, *Bradford, Central*

Labourers' Allotments, Comm. *cl.* 1, 1133, 1134; *cl.* 2, 1185; *cl.* 3, 1236, 1925, 1930, 1946; Motion for reporting Progress, 1948, 1951, 1962

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Lefevre, Right Hon. G. J. Shaw—*cont.*
  Loss of Life at Sea, Royal Commission on, 366
  Metropolitan Police, Comm. *cl.* 2, 1251, 1253
  Parliament — Business of the House—Arrangement of Public Business, Ministerial Statement, 965
  Post Office Savings Banks and Government Annuities, 2R. 349; Comm. *cl.* 1, 819, 820; Consid. 1249
  Public Offices—New Admiralty and War Office—Messrs. Leeming's Claims, 941, 942
  Supply—Prisons in England, Wales, and the Colonies, 1469, 1471, 1473
  Truck, Lords' Amendts. Consid. 1248

Leighton, Mr. S., *Shropshire, Oswestry*
  Education Department—Technical Instruction Bill—Commercial Instruction, 661
  Tithe Commutation and Redemption—A Royal Commission, 80

Lewis, Sir C. E., *Antrim, N.*
  Ireland — Crime and Outrage — Excursion Train from Portrush to Belfast—Firing on the People at Ballymoney, 476
  Irish Land Law, Lords' Amendts. to Commons' Amendts. Consid. 996

Licensed Premises (Earlier Closing) (Scotland) Bill (No. 223)
(*The Earl of Camperdown*)
l. Moved, "That the Report of the Amendments be now received" *Aug* 12, 226
  Amendt. to leave out ("now,") add ("this day three months") (*The Lord Denman*); [The Amendt., not being seconded, was not put]; Motion agreed to; Amendts. reported
  Read 3ª *Aug* 15, 457; on Question, "That the Bill do pass?" after short debate, Question to be put to-morrow
  Bill passed *Aug* 16
c. Lords' Amendts. considered *Aug* 23, 1676; after debate, Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*Mr. Caldwell*); Question put, and agreed to; Debate adjourned

Lieutenancy Clerks Allowances Bill
(*Mr. Brodrick, Mr. Secretary Stanhope, Mr. Northcote*) [Bill 274]
c. Committee; Report; read 3° * *Aug* 11
l. Read 1ª * (*Lord Harris*) *Aug* 12 (No. 231)
  Read 2ª * *Aug* 16
  Committee *; Report *Aug* 19
  Read 3ª * *Aug* 25

Llewellyn, Mr. E. H., *Somerset, N.*
  Coal Mines, &c. Regulation, Comm. *cl.* 40, 573; *cl.* 46, 620; Amendt. 623, 625; *cl.* 50, Rule 24, 789, 798
  Labourers' Allotments, Comm. 315, 318; *cl.* 2, 1198

Local Government Board—President (*see* Ritchie, Right Hon. C. T.)

Local Government Board—Secretary to (*see* Long, Mr. W. H.)

Local Government Boundaries [Salaries, &c.]
c. Res. considered in Committee, and agreed to *Aug* 15, 653
  Moved, "That this House doth agree with the Resolution of the Committee" *Aug* 16, 829; Motion withdrawn; Report deferred

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 5) Bill (*Lord Balfour*)
l. Royal Assent *Aug* 23 [50 & 51 *Vict.* c. clxxix]

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 7) Bill (*Lord Balfour*)
l. Royal Assent *Aug* 23 [50 & 51 *Vict.* c. clxxx]

Long, Mr. W. H. (Secretary to the Local Government Board), *Wilts, Devizes*
  Labourers' Allotments, Comm. *cl.* 2, 1170, 1175

Lord Advocate, The (*see* Macdonald, Right Hon. J. H. A.)

Lord Lieutenant of Ireland — Chief Secretary to the (*see* Balfour, Right Hon. A. J.)

Lord Lieutenant of Ireland—Parliamentary Under Secretary to the (*see* King-Harman, Right Hon. Colonel E. R.)

Lord President of the Council (*see* Cranbrook, Viscount)

Lothian, Marquess of (Secretary for Scotland)
  Agricultural Labourers' Holidays (Scotland), Comm. 238
  Conveyancing (Scotland) Acts Amendment, 1776, 1788
  Licensed Premises (Earlier Closing) (Scotland) Report, 231; 3R. 458, 459, 461
  Public Libraries (Scotland) Acts Amendment, 2R. 1792

Lowther, Mr. J. W., *Cumberland, Penrith*
  Coal Mines, &c. Regulation, Comm. *cl.* 22, Amendt. 515, 516, 525; *cl.* 25, Amendt. 527, 528; *cl.* 40, 585; *cl.* 46, Amendt. 613, 614; *cl.* 50, Rule 6, Amendt. 728; *cl.* 63, Amendt. 864

Lubbock, Sir J., *London University*
  Loss of Life at Sea—Royal Commission, 366
  Post Office Savings Banks and Government Annuities, Comm. *cl.* 1, 820, 821
  Supply—British Museum, &c. 1563, 1572
    Learned Societies in Great Britain and Ireland, 1603
    Public Education, 399

Lunacy Districts (Scotland) Bill [H.L.]
(*The Lord Advocate*)
c. Order for Committee read; Moved, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair" (*The Lord Advocate*) Aug 24, 1724; after short debate, Question put, and agreed to; Committee; Report [Bill 318]

McArthur, Mr. A., *Leicester*
- Highway Acts—The Salvation Army—Religious Services in Stamford Market Place, 1811
- Morocco—British Jurisdiction over Offending British Subjects, 1522
- Supply—Prisons in England, Wales, and the Colonies, 1480

Macartney, Mr. W. G. E., *Antrim, S.*
- Ireland—Questions
  - Crime and Outrage—Assaults at Westport, 482;—National Foresters' Excursion at Ballymena, 1094, 1096, 1348
  - Royal Irish Constabulary—Court of Inquiry—Glaslough, Co. Monaghan—Constable Kennedy, 68
  - Ulster Canal and Tyrone Navigation, 1373
- Irish Land Law, Lords' Amendts. to Commons' Amendts. Consid. 1001

McCartan, Mr. M., *Down, S.*
- Ireland—Questions
  - Crime and Outrage—Excursion Train from Portrush to Belfast—Firing on the People at Ballymoney, 477, 478
  - Law and Justice—Sentence on the Lad Killeen—Major Traill, 668
  - National Education—Books Used in the National Schools, 489, 490
  - Post Office—Increased Mail Accommodation in the North of Ireland, 925
  - Riotous Meetings—Orange Meetings at Lurgan and Silverwood, 483, 484
- Irish Land Law, Lords' Amendts. to Commons' Amendts. Consid. *cl.* C, 302
- Law and Police—Arrest of Fred Henderson at Norwich, 674, 675
- Post Office—Central Telegraph Office—Clerical Staff, 927
- Vaccination Acts—Imprisonment of Mrs. Walton, of Appleby, 930

M'Carthy, Mr. Justin, *Londonderry*
- Ireland—Prisons—Salaries to the Chaplains and Surgeons, 1371

Macdonald, Right Hon. J. H. A. (Lord Advocate), *Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities*
- Coal Mines, &c. Regulation, Comm. *cl.* 28, 533; *cl.* 49, 641, 643, 645; *cl.* 68, Amendt. 874; *cl.* 76, Amendt. 896
- Criminal Law (Scotland) Procedure (No. 2), Lords' Amendts. Consid. 1253, 1254
- Friendly Societies—Royal Liver Friendly Society, 679
- Licensed Premises (Earlier Closing) (Scotland), Lords' Amendts. Consid. 1678
- Lunacy Districts (Scotland), Comm. 1725, 1726; *cl.* 1, *ib.*; Amendt. 1727; *cl.* 4, 1731; Report, 1735

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Macdonald, Right Hon. J. H. A.—*cont.*
- Scotland—Questions
  - Commissioners of Lunacy—Northern District Asylum, 470
  - Crofters' Commission—Annual Report, 1806
  - Crown Rights—County of Orkney, 471
  - Education Department—Education Act, 1872—Application for Building Loans, 923;—James Gillespie's Foundation, Edinburgh, 930
  - Expedition to Tiree—Police Constable D. Macpherson, 1363
  - Fishery Board—Salaries, 471
  - Footpaths and Open Spaces—Protection of Public Rights—Local Government Bill, 492
  - Forth Bridge, 65
  - Greenock Police—Alleged Assault on a Boy, 1351
  - Highland Crofters—Payment of Rates on Reduced Rents, 246
  - Orkney and Shetland Islands, 474
  - Parliamentary Voters—Disqualification for Non-Payment of Poor Rates, 1799
- Scotland—Law and Justice—Questions
  - Sheriff Court at Dornoch—Case of Hugh Matheson, Cottar, 52
  - Sheriff Substitutes, 1102
  - Statute Law, 673
- Secretary for Scotland Act (1885) Amendment, Comm. *cl.* 2, Amendt. 1743, 1763, 1764; *cl.* 3, 1770; Amendt. 1773; *add. cl. ib.*, 1774
- Supply—Courts of Law and Justice, Scotland, 1687
  - Crofters' Commission, 1708, 1709, 1712, 1714, 1720
  - Police—Counties and Burghs, Scotland, Prisons, Scotland, 1724
  - Public Education in Scotland, 438, 446, 447

McDonald, Mr. P., *Sligo, N.*
- Ireland—Questions
  - Custom House, Cork—Merchandize under Bond—Rights of Lessees, 936, 1356
  - Dublin Metropolitan Police—Arrest for Drunkenness, 49
  - Harbour Accommodation—Report of Sir James Allport's Commission, Sligo, 49
  - National Education—Notification of Results, 937
  - Post Office—Central Telegraph Department—Non-Promotion of Clerks, 250
- Suffragans' Nomination, 2R. Motion for Adjournment, 652, 653

McDonald, Dr. R., *Ross and Cromarty*
- Scotland—Highland Crofters—Payment of Rates on Reduced Rents, 246
- Supply—Crofters' Commission, 1713, 1714, 1715
  - Public Education in Scotland, 447

Macdonald, Mr. W. A., *Queen's Co., Ossory*
- Egyptian Exiles—Arabi Pasha, 1111
- Ireland—Criminal Law and Procedure Act, 1887—Proclamation of the National League—The Irish Privy Council, 1825
  - Registration—Incidence of Expenses, 1107

McEwan, Mr. W., *Edinburgh, Central*
Lunacy Districts (Scotland), Comm. *cl.* 4, 1731
Supply—Register House Department, Edinburgh, 1690, 1693, 1695

Mac Innes, Mr. M., *Northumberland, Hexham*
Labourers' Allotments, Comm. *cl.* 3, Amendt. 1966

McLagan, Mr. P., *Linlithgow*
India — Native States (Hyderabad) — The Sirdar Diler-ul-Mulk, 485
Licensed Premises (Earlier Closing) (Scotland), Lords' Amendts. Consid. 1682
Supply—Learned Societies in Great Britain and Ireland, 1601

McLaren, Mr. W. S. B., *Cheshire, Crewe*
Agricultural Department—Cheshire Dairy Institute, 1529
  Dairy Schools — Munster Dairy School, 1529
Labourers' Allotments, Comm. *cl.* 3, 1936
Supply—Learned Societies in Great Britain and Ireland, 1596, 1600

Maclean, Mr. F. W., *Oxford, Woodstock*
Labourers' Allotments, Comm. *cl.* 3, 1940

Maclure, Mr. J. W., *Lancashire, S.E., Stretford*
Post Office Savings Banks and Government Annuities, 2R. 353

Macnaghten, Lord
Irish Land Law, Commons' Amendts. Consid. *cl.* 9, 24 ; *cl.* E, 36 ; *cl.* 24, 40

Mac Neill, Mr. J. G. S., *Donegal, S.*
Ireland—Proclamation of the National League—Administration of the Criminal Law and Procedure Act, 1815

Madden, Mr. Serjeant D. H., *Dublin University*
Irish Land Law, Lords' Amendts. to Commons' Amendts. Consid. *cl.* E, 984, 985

Mahony, Mr. P., *Meath, N.*
Irish Land Law, Lords' Amendts. to Commons' Amendts. Consid. 994, 995, 996, 1030, 1031

Manners, Right Hon. Lord J. J. R. (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster), *Leicestershire, E.*
Agricultural Department—The Hessian Fly, 1349
Secretary for Scotland Act (1885) Amendment, Comm. *cl.* 2, 1757

Margarine (Fraudulent Sale) Bill
(*Viscount Powerscourt*)
l. Royal Assent *Aug* 23 [50 & 51 *Vict.* c. 29]

Marjoribanks, Right Hon. E., *Berwickshire*
Public Works Loans, 2R. 204 ; Comm. *cl.* 2, Amendt. 359, 362
Supply—Public Education, 436
  Public Education in Scotland, 446

Marriages Confirmation (Antwerp) Bill
(*Mr. James Stuart, Mr. Sexton, Mr. Picton*)
c. Bill withdrawn * *Aug* 22 [Bill 326]

Mason, Mr. S., *Lanark, Mid*
Coal Mines — Colliery Disaster at Udston, Lanarkshire, 1109
Coal Mines, &c. Regulation, Comm. *cl.* 21, 514 ; *cl.* 35, 549 ; *cl.* 41, Amendt. 592 ; *cl.* 44, 599, 606 ; *cl.* 49, 644 ; *cl.* 50, Rule 23, 784 ; Amendt. 785 ; Rule 33, Amendt. 834, 835 ; *add. cl.* 911
Licensed Premises (Earlier Closing) (Scotland), Lords' Amendts. Consid. 1679
Parliament—Business of the House, 1345 ;—Arrangement of Public Business, Ministerial Statement, 962
Supply—Prisons, Scotland, Motion for reporting Progress, 1724

Matthews, Right Hon. H. (Secretary of State for the Home Department), *Birmingham, E.*
Agricultural Department—The Hessian Fly, 73, 74
Charitable Lotteries, 671
Coal Mines, &c. Regulation, Comm. *cl.* 21, 498, 499, 505, 507, 511, 514 ; *cl.* 22, 515, 516, 518, 519 ; *cl.* 24, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527 ; *cl.* 25, 528 ; *cl.* 26, 529, 530 ; *cl.* 28, 531, 532, 533, 534 ; *cl.* 29, 535 ; *cl.* 30, *ib.* ; *cl.* 34, 536, 538, 540 ; *cl.* 35, 541, 542, 546, 548 ; *cl.* 36, 550, 553, 555, 557 ; *cl.* 37, 560 ; *cl.* 38, 561 ; *cl.* 40, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 584 ; Amendt. 585, 588 ; *cl.* 41, Amendt. 590 ; *cl.* 42, Amendt. 593 ; *cl.* 43, 594, 596, 597 ; *cl.* 44, 599, 606, 610 ; *cl.* 45, 612 ; *cl.* 46, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 620, 624 ; *cl.* 48, 625, 628, 630, 631, 633 ; Amendt. 634 ; *cl.* 49, 635, 638 ; *cl.* 50, 687, 688, 694, 695, 697, 698, 699 ; Rule 1, 701, 705, 707 ; Rule 2, 712, 713 ; Rule 4, Amendt. 715, 717, 719, 721, 722, 723 ; Rule 5, 725, 728 ; Rule 8, 729, 731, 732 ; Rule 9, 735, 736 ; Rule 10, 738, 745, 746 ; Rule 12, 753, 755, 756 ; Amendt. 757, 768, 770, 772 ; Rule 15, 775 ; Rule 22, 777, 778, 779 ; Rule 23, 781, 782 ; Rule 24, 787, 797, 803 ; Rule 32, 807, 809, 812, 813 ; Rule 33, 831, 832 ; Rule 36, 833, 834, 835 ; Rule 37, 836, 844 ; Amendt. 845, 846, 849 ; Rule 38, 852, 858 ; Amendt. 859, 862, 863 ; *cl.* 51, *ib.* ; *cl.* 63, 864, 865, 867, 868 ; *cl.* 64, 869 ; *cl.* 66, 870 ; Amendt. 871, 872 ; *cl.* 68, 878, 879, 881 ; *cl.* 70, *ib.* ; *cl.* 71, 884 ; *cl.* 75, 886, 888, 889, 891, 892, 894 ; Amendt. 895, 896 ; *cl.* 76, 897 ; *cl.* 80, 898, 899 ; *add. cl.* 903
Coal Mines, &c. Regulation — Weights and Measures Act, 1878, 491
Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1885—Evasion by Keepers of Cafés Chantants in Rotterdam and other Places, 1533

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    Religious Services at Warwick, 1807
  Law and Justice—Questions
    Burning of St. Paul's Church, Colwyn Bay, 1805
    Court Houses — Accommodation for Prisoners awaiting Trial, 47
    Criminal Law—Israel Lipski, Convicted of Murder, 253, 364, 448, 449, 1102, 1103, 1104;—Southampton Murderer, 1374
    Epping Petty Sessions—Assaults by Gipsies, 64, 662
    Grimsby County Police Court — Oyster Stealing—Severe Sentence, 660
    Mayor of Taunton, 673
    Miriam Jones, Sentence on, for Attempted Child Murder, 1363, 1823
  Law and Police—Questions
    Arrest of a French Lady (Madame Drouin), at Cowes, 948, 949, 1371
    Arrest of Fred Henderson at Norwich, 675, 676
  Law and Police (Metropolis)—Questions
    Arrest of Miss Cass—Mr. Newton, Metropolitan Police Magistrate, 70
    Mr. H. Inwood, Charge against, of Assault, 78
    Police Supervision of Disorderly Houses, 677, 947
  Merchant Shipping—Wreck Commissioner's Court—Nautical Assessors, 1106, 1107
  Metropolis—Closed Burial Grounds—State of Whitfield Chapel Burial Ground, Tottenham Court Road, 1794
  Metropolitan Police, Comm. *cl.* 2, 1251
  Metropolitan Police—Questions
    Age and Service, 926
    Inspection of Music Halls, &c.—Pavilion Music Hall, 480
    Promotion, 243, 244
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  Mines Regulation Acts—William Shaw, Dismissal of—Tawd Vale Colliery, Skelmersdale, 59, 1793
  Parliamentary Elections—North Hunts Election—Parish Constable of Earith, 1372
  Prisons (England and Wales) — Clerkenwell and Coldbath Fields — Sale of Sites, 1366
    "Hard Labour" at Horfield Gaol, 64
  Secretary for Scotland Act (1885) Amendment, Comm. *cl.* 2, 1766
  Supply — Broadmoor Lunatic Asylum, 1511, 1512, 1514
    Metropolitan Police, &c. 1455, 1457, 1462, 1465
    Prisons in England, Wales, and the Colonies, 1470, 1478, 1496, 1497
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  Tithe Commutation and Redemption—A Royal Commission, 80
  Vaccination Acts — Imprisonment of Mrs. Walton, of Appleby, 931
    Prosecution at Otley, West Riding of Yorkshire, 951, 952

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  Wales—Merioneth Police—Dismissal of Police Constable Griffith, 1357
    Tithe Commission—Welsh-Speaking Witnesses, 1367, 1368

MAXWELL, Sir H. E. (A Lord of the Treasury), *Wigton*
  Supply—Newfoundland Fishery Negotiations, 72

Merchandise Marks Law Consolidation and Amendment Bill
(*Lord Stanley of Preston*)
l. Royal Assent *Aug* 23 [50 & 51 *Vict.* c. 28]

Merchant Seamen's Widows and Orphans Pension Bill (*Colonel Hill Sir James Corry, Mr. Sinclair, Mr. Stephen Williamson*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Aug* 18 [Bill 382]

Merchant Shipping
  Burning of the "City of Montreal," Question Sir Robert Fowler; Answer, The Firs Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith *Aug* 19, 1114;—*Recovery of the Missin Boat*, Observation, The Secretary to th Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms *Aug* 24, 1776
  Legislation — International Regulations o Navigation, Question, Mr. Channing; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trad (Baron Henry De Worms) *Aug* 18, 940
  Royal Commission on Loss of Life at Sea Question, Sir John Lubbock; Answer, Mr Shaw Lefevre *Aug* 13, 366
  Wreck Commissioner's Court—The Nautica Assessors, Questions, Mr. Provand; An swers, The Secretary of State for the Hom Department (Mr. Matthews) *Aug* 19, 1106

METROPOLIS (*Questions*)
  Closed Burial Grounds—State of Whitfiel Chapel Burial Ground, Tottenham Cour Road, Question, Mr. Lawson; Answer, Th Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Aug* 25, 1794
  Public Health—Condition of Trafalgar Squar Questions, Mr. Kimber; Answers, The Fir Commissioner of Works (Mr. Plunke *Aug* 25, 1803
  The Regent's Canal Basin, Question, M Lawson; Answer, The President of th Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie *Aug* 25, 1794
  The Parks
  Dogs in the Ornamental Waters, Questio Mr. Lawson; Answer, The First Commi sioner of Works (Mr. Plunket) *Aug* 16, 66

Metropolitan Board of Works—Dangero Condition of the Church of St. Mar le-Strand
  Question, Mr. Kimber; Answer, The Fir Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smit *Aug* 15, 492

Metropolitan Board of Works (Money) Bill (*The Earl of Crawford*)
l. Read 1ª * *Aug* 11 (No. 226)
Read 2ª * *Aug* 12
Committee *; Report *Aug* 15
Read 3ª * *Aug* 16
Royal Assent *Aug* 23 [50 & 51 *Vict.* c. 31]

Metropolitan Police
Age and Service, Question, Mr. Pickersgill; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Aug* 18, 925
Inspection of Music Halls, &c.—The Pavilion Music Hall, Questions, Mr. S. Smith, Mr. Bradlaugh; Answers, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Aug* 15, 480
Promotion, Questions, Mr. Lawson; Answers, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Aug* 12, 243
The Superannuation Fund, Question, Mr. Lawson; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Aug* 12, 243 [See title *Law and Police*]

Metropolitan Police Bill
(*Mr. Secretary Matthews, Mr. Stuart-Wortley*)
c. Report of Select Comm. *Aug* 12 [No. 285]
Committee * (*on re-comm.*) *Aug* 13 [Bill 321]
Committee; Report; read 3º *Aug* 19, 1251
l. Read 1ª * (*Earl Brownlow*) *Aug* 25 (No. 242)

Mines Regulation Acts
The Park Mine, Tawd Vale Colliery, Skelmersdale, Lancashire—Dismissal of William Shaw, Question, Mr. Tomlinson; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Aug* 11, 58;—*Repairing of Roads,* Question, Mr. Burt; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Aug* 25, 1793 [See title *Coal Mines*]

Mining Accidents Insurance (Scotland) Bill (*Mr. Baird, Mr. Hozier, Mr. Vernon, Mr. Hugh Elliot, Mr. Bruce*)
c. Bill withdrawn * *Aug* 19 [Bill 343]

Molloy, Mr. B. C., *King's Co., Birr*
Irish Land Law, Lords' Amendts. to Commons' Amendts. Consid. 292; *cl.* C, 299
Supply—British Museum, &c. 1564; Amendt. 1568, 1574
Law Officers, 130, 132
Science and Art Department, &c. 1544, 1559, 1562
Supreme Court of Judicature, 1407, 1409

Morley, Right Hon. J., *Newcastle-upon-Tyne*
Irish Land Law, Lords' Amendts. to Commons' Amendts. Consid. 292, 296

Morocco—British Jurisdiction over Offending British Subjects
Question, Mr. A. M'Arthur; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) *Aug* 23, 1522

Mount-Temple, Lord
Open Spaces (Dublin), 2R. 1788, 1789, 1790

Mowbray, Mr. R. G. C., *Lancashire, Prestwich*
Africa (West Coast)—River Gambia, 944

Mundella, Right Hon. A. J., *Sheffield, Brightside*
Supply—Public Education, 380, 382, 403, 411, 424

Municipal Regulation (Constabulary) &c.) (Belfast) Bill [Bill 291]
(*Colonel King-Harman, Mr. Solicitor General for Ireland*)
c. Report of Select Comm. *Aug* 15 [No. 288]

Municipal Regulation (*Constabulary, &c.*) (*Belfast*) [*Salaries*]
c. Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [5th August], "That this House will, upon Monday next, resolve itself into a Committee to consider of authorizing the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of a portion of the Salaries of any additional Police Magistrates for the borough of Belfast, that may be appointed under any Act of the present Session to amend the Acts relating to the Royal Irish Constabulary, and to make provision for the appointment of a Watch Committee in Belfast, and for other purposes in relation thereto" *Aug* 15, 653; Question again proposed; Motion withdrawn; Resolved, That this House will, To-morrow, &c.
Res. considered in Committee, and agreed to *Aug* 19, 1255

Navy (*Admiralty*)
Alleged Misappropriation of Stores at Haulbowline, Questions, Mr. Hooper; Answers, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton), The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) *Aug* 23, 1523
Contracts—Tenders for Pork, Question, Mr. Conybeare; Answer, Lord Charles Beresford (A Lord of the Admiralty) *Aug* 15, 481
Evolutionary Squadron, The—The Nordenfelt Guns, Question, Colonel Duncan; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *Aug* 15, 475
H.M.SS. "Sultan" and "Inflexible"—Service Ammunition, Question, Captain Cotton; Answer, The Surveyor General of Ordnance (Mr. Northcote) *Aug* 11, 47
Re-organization of the Clerical Establishment, Question, Mr. Pickersgill; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *Aug* 16, 676
Shipbuilding—H.M.S. "Australia," Question, Mr. Addison; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton *Aug* 11, 67
Ships—Special Tests of Speed, Question, Sir Henry Tyler; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *Aug* 15, 489

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Subvention of Merchant Steamers for War Purposes, Question, Mr. Baden-Powell; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *Aug* 18, 953; Question, Captain Colomb; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *Aug* 19, 1104; Question, Captain Colomb; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Forwood) *Aug* 25, 1798

Personnel
Writers, Question, Mr. Arthur O'Connor; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *Aug* 12, 249

The Dockyards
Dismissal of Workmen at Portsmouth, Question, Sir Samuel Wilson; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *Aug* 25, 1796

The Recent Naval Manœuvres
Casualties to Ships, Question, Captain Colomb; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *Aug* 12, 246; Question, Mr. Provand; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *Aug* 19, 1109
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Paget, Sir R. H., *Somerset, Wells*
Coal Mines, &c. Regulation, Comm. *cl.* 50, Rule 23, 781

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(*Mr. Cobb, Mr. Channing, Mr. Fuller, Mr. James Ellis, Mr. Herbert Gardner, Mr. Thomas Ellis*)
c. Bill withdrawn * *Aug* 25 [Bill 170]

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Private Bills—Standing Orders, Nos. 85 *&* 102
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Saturday Sittings
Resolved, That the Sitting of the House on Saturday next be held subject to the Standing Orders that regulate the Sitting of the House on Wednesdays (*Mr. William Henry Smith*) *Aug* 11 ; *Aug* 19
Moved, "That this House do now adjourn" (*Mr. Jackson*) *Aug* 18, 1062 ; after short debate, Question put ; A. 64, N. 48 ; M. 16 (D.L. 404)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE
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Ordered, That the Orders of the Day be postponed until after the Notice of Motion relating to the Special Proclamation as to the Association known as the Irish National League (*Mr. William Henry Smith*) *Aug* 25

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE AND PUBLIC BUSINESS
Question, Mr. Mundella ; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) [Further Questions thereon] *Aug* 11, 83 ; Questions, Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. James Stuart, Sir William Harcourt ; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Aug* 12, 264 ; Questions, Mr. E. Robertson ; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Aug* 13, 365 ; Question, Mr. Childers ; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) [Further Questions thereon] *Aug* 15, 493 ; Questions, Mr. E. Robertson, Mr. Henry H. Fowler ; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) [Further Questions thereon] *Aug* 16, 683 ; Questions, Mr. Childers, Sir Joseph Pease, Mr. Sexton, Mr. Arthur O'Connor ; Answers, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson), The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) *Aug* 17, 913 ; Ministerial Statement, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) ; short debate thereon *Aug* 18, 957 ; Questions, Sir George Campbell, Mr. Conybeare, Mr. Bryce ; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) [Further Questions thereon] *Aug* 20, 1344 ;—*Rating of Machinery Bill*, Question, Mr. Tomlinson ; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) *Aug* 11, 58 ; — *Parliamentary Franchise* (*Extension to Women*) *Bill*, Question, Mr. Radcliffe Cooke ; Answer, Mr. Woodall *Aug* 11, 70 ;—*Conveyancing Acts Amendment* (*Scotland*) *Bill*, Question, Mr. Cunninghame Graham ; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Aug* 11, 80 ;—*Technical Instruction Bill*, Questions, Mr. Howard Vincent, Mr. Mark Stewart ; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Aug* 19, 1109 ;—*Scotch Business*, Question, Sir George Campbell ; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Aug* 24, 1685

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Rule 2 (*Adjournment of the House*)
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Aug 17—*For* Huntingdonshire (Ramsey Division), *v.* William Henry Fellowes, esquire, now Lord de Ramsey, called up to the House of Peers

New Member Sworn
Aug 16—John Tomlinson Brunner, esquire (*Chester County* (*Northwich Division*)

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Parliamentary Franchise (Extension to Women) Bill
(*Mr. Woodall, Mr. Houldsworth, Mr. Illingworth, Mr. M'Laren, Sir Robert Fowler, Mr. Howorth, Mr. Maclure, Mr. Stansfeld*)
c. Bill withdrawn * *Aug* 12 [Bill 128]

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Police Constables' Pensions Bill
(*Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson, Lord Claud Hamilton, Mr. Burdett-Coutts, Sir George Russell, Mr. Gerald Balfour, Mr. Howard Vincent*)
c. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" *Aug* 15, 649; after short debate, Moved,

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Police Constables' Pensions Bill—cont.
"That the Debate be now adjourned" (*Mr. Biggar*); Question put; A. 19, N. 64; M. 45 (D.L. 380) [2.45 A.M.]
Original Question put, and agreed to; Bill read 2° [Bill 35]

PORTMAN, Hon. E. B., *Dorsetshire, N.*
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Communication by Telephone between Distant Towns, Questions, Mr. Jacob Bright; Answers, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) *Aug* 16, 664
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Sunday Postal Labour—Report of the Select Committee, Question, Dr. Clark; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) *Aug* 25, 1806

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(*Mr. Raikes, Mr. Jackson*)
c. Read 2°, after short debate *Aug* 12, 342
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Post Office Savings Banks and Government Annuities Bill—cont.
the provisions of the Bill to all Savings Banks administered by Trustees;" Question put, and agreed to; Committee; Report, with an amended Title
As amended, considered *Aug* 18, 1061; after short debate, Debate adjourned
Debate resumed *Aug* 19, 1249
Read 3° * *Aug* 22 [*Changed to* "Savings Banks and Government Annuities"]
l. Read 1$_3$ * (*M. Salisbury*) *Aug* 25 (No. 243)

POWELL, Mr. F. S., *Wigan*
Coal Mines, &c. Regulation, Comm. *cl.* 21, 500; *cl.* 28, 533; *cl.* 34, 536; *cl.* 35, 544; *cl.* 40, 564; *cl.* 44, 605; *cl.* 50, 690; Rule 5, 726; Rule 24, 795, 798; Rule 38, 854; *cl.* 63, 866; *cl.* 71, 883; *cl.* 76, 896
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Clerkenwell and Coldbath Fields—Sale of Sites, Question, Mr. Pickersgill; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Aug* 22, 1366
"*Hard Labour*" *at Horfield Gaol, Bath*, Question, Colonel Laurie; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Aug* 11, 63

PROVAND, Mr. A. D., *Glasgow, Blackfriars, &c.*
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Public Health—Report on Infant Mortality
Question, Mr. Picton; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) *Aug* 16, 672 [See title *Metropolis*]

Public Libraries (Scotland) Acts Amendment Bill (*Dr. Cameron, Mr. Cameron Corbett, Mr. Graham*)
c. Committee * ; Report *Aug* 12 [Bill 180]
Considered * ; read 3° *Aug* 15
l. Read 1ª * (*E. of Crawford*) *Aug* 16 (No. 238)
Read 2ª *Aug* 25, 1791

Public Offices—The New Admiralty and War Office — Grant to Messrs. Leemings, the Architects
Questions, Mr. Shaw Lefevre ; Answers, The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Plunket) *Aug* 18, 941 ; Question, Mr. Dillwyn ; Answer, The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Plunket) *Aug* 22, 1359

Public Parks and Works (Metropolis) Bill (*The Lord Henniker*)
l. Read 2ª * *Aug* 11 (No. 214)
Report * ; Committee ; Report ; read 3ª *Aug* 12
Royal Assent *Aug* 23 [50 & 51 *Vict.* c. 34]

Public Works Loans Bill [Bill 364]
(*Mr. Jackson, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Herbert Maxwell*)
c. Read 2°, after short debate *Aug* 11, 204
Committee ; Report *Aug* 12, 359
Read 3° * *Aug* 13
l. Read 1ª * (*L. Elphinstone*) *Aug* 15 (No. 234)
Read 2ª * ; Committee negatived *Aug* 19
Read 3ª * *Aug* 25

PYNE, Mr. J. D., *Waterford, W.*
Supply—Suez Canal Company, 1672

Qualifications of Guardians of the Poor Bill
(*Mr. Henry Wilson, Mr. Stuart, Mr. M'Laren, Mr. James Rowlands*)
c. Bill withdrawn * *Aug* 15 [Bill 315]

QUEEN, THE — *Celebration of the Jubilee Year of Her Majesty's Reign*
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Parliamentary Elections—Cheshire (Northwich Division)—Employment of Post Office Clerks, 924
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RASCH, Major F. C., *Essex, S.E.*
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RATHBONE, Mr. W., *Carnarvonshire, Arfon*
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Revenue Bill (*Mr. Jackson, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Herbert Maxwell*)
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c, Order for Committee read; Moved, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair" *Aug* 24, 1736
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